

Berea Bible Handbook – Part Eight

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Ezekiel and Daniel

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The Theology of the Prophet Ezekiel

History around Jeremiah

The Prophet Ezekiel and his contemporaries confronted what for the Israelites was the most traumatic possible challenge to their faith: the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. It is difficult for the contemporary Protestant to grasp the significance of this theological catastrophe. Perhaps the best we can do is imagine the impact it would have on Muslims if Mecca were to disappear under the mushroom cloud of an atomic warhead, or conceive how at a loss Roman Catholics would feel if the ground opened and swallowed the Vatican. Israel suffered at least as much confusion when they saw the temple of Yahweh go up in flames.

Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, was probably born around 622 B.C. He was taken captive to Babylonia in 597 along with other prominent Jerusalemites. He settled near the "Kebar River" between Babylon and Nippur, and at age thirty was called to the prophetic office (so taking 1:1). From this vantage point, he watched the demise of Jerusalem around 586 B.C.

Israel, it seems, had come to feel that their status as the people of God and in particular that the presence of the house of God among them had made them invulnerable. Jeremiah 7:4 implies that the people trusted in the "temple of the Lord" for security. They could not imagine that God would allow his house to fall. Ezekiel's task was to demonstrate that this crutch was sure to fail even while he assured them that God himself had not failed.

Ezekiel 1 and Divine Transcendence

The Book of Ezekiel has a beginning few readers can forget. Standing by the Kebar River Ezekiel suddenly sees the vision of the chariot of Yahweh (1:2-28). The chariot comes in a storm, the sign of a theophany. In the chariot he sees the four creatures, each with four faces (of a human, an ox, an eagle, and a lion). He also views the strange "wheels within wheels" that were full of eyes. Above the creatures is a dome and above that, a throne. On the throne sits a fiery man-like figure. The chariot darts about without ever having to pivot.

While scholars have debated the details of the vision, it seems beyond question that it portrays God as the sovereign over the whole earth. The four faces of creatures represent four of the mightiest creatures (the ox, over domestic animals; the lion, over wild animals; the eagle, over birds; and the human, over all). The wheels within wheels represent the freedom to move in any of the four directions without having to pivot to the right or left, and thus symbolize God's omnipresence. The eyes imply sight in every direction, and thus indicate God's omniscience. The word "dome" is in Hebrew *raqia* , the same word used for the vault of heaven in Genesis 1. It symbolizes the physical universe as metaphorically under heaven, the throne-room of God. The human-like figure seated on the throne above the dome implied that Yahweh is sovereign over heaven and earth.

For the reader, the surprise is that Ezekiel begins his message of judgment not with the sinfulness of Judah but with the sovereignty of God. People in the ancient world connected their gods with local areas and specific domains (see 1 Kings 20:23-28). A god was supposed to protect his domain, and if one city conquered another, that meant that the god of the victor was greater than the god of the vanquished. Many Jews also embraced this thinking, and it led to two dangerous conclusions. First, they thought that Yahweh was bound to protect Jerusalem. Second, if the city should fall, it meant that Yahweh was weak and small.

Ezekiel's vision showed them that it was not that Yahweh was too small, but that he was too great. As the God who transcended the earth, he had no need of any

temple. As Solomon had recognized, even heaven cannot contain him "how much less this temple?" (1 Kings 8:27). Precisely because he was no local deity, he did not need to defend any earthly house. But as Lord over all, he was also judge of all, including Jerusalem. In short, the power and authority of God meant not that Jerusalem was impregnable, but that it was doomed.

The Radical Sin of Israel and the Radical Methods of Ezekiel

The opening vision is only the first of many strange messages in Ezekiel. While it may not quite be true to say that for Ezekiel the medium was the message, certainly the media he used carried within them a drama and force commensurate with the desperate nature of the situation.

More than any other prophet, Ezekiel acted out his message in parables. Among these actions was a pretend siege of Jerusalem, with a brick serving as the city (4:1-5:4). Like a child with toy soldiers, he built a siege ramp against his miniature Jerusalem and carried out the symbolic assault. But this was no game. Ezekiel was as much a prisoner as were the Jews trapped in Jerusalem. Day after day he lay on his side and was no more free to move about than they were free to escape the city. Like them, he ate food cooked over dung. At last, he cut off his hair and chopped, burned, and scattered it. Israel had been as near to God as Ezekiel's hair had been to the prophet, but they would be slaughtered and dispersed save for a small remnant.

He even had to subordinate the death of his wife to his message (Jeremiah 24:16-27). When she passed away, God told him not to enter into the customary period of mourning. He implied that the Jews were soon to have more than enough of dead wives, husbands, children, and parents. Times of sorrow for which no mourning could be adequate were about to descend upon them.

Ezekiel's language is the boldest, most graphic in the Bible. Chapter 16 describes the nation's history in a parable. She began life as an abandoned baby lying naked in blood and still attached to the placenta. Yahweh pitied her and protected her, and she grew to sexual maturity. Wealthy and beautiful, she turned to promiscuity and prostitution. If Ezekiel's language lacks delicacy, it is because he is trying to warn the people of the horrors soon to overtake them.

Ezekiel's language is not all emotional imagery, however. In chapter 14, using language that reflects the thoroughness of a trained priest, he describes in detail God's principles of judgment. He demonstrates first that God is not moved by outward Acts of religion; even if people come to consult God, he will not receive them as long as they harbour apostasy (vv. 1-11). Second, he declares

that no amount of pious intercession will save a people bent on rebellion (vv. 12-23).

The Duty of the Watchman

God routinely addresses Ezekiel as "son of man" (that is, "mortal"), and so reminds him that he and his people are small and fragile. Their only hope of survival is in God.

God commissions Ezekiel as the watchman over Jerusalem. If he carries out his responsibility and warns the people of the coming disaster, he will be innocent of their deaths when they refuse to listen. But if he shirks his duty, their blood will be on his head (Jeremiah 3:16-21). God warned him that they would be both obstinate and vicious, and that he must not fear them (Jeremiah 2:3-8).

More than that, Ezekiel in a vision ate a scroll that was the word of God (Jeremiah 2:9-3:11). His only task was to receive and declare God's message. To emphasize this, Ezekiel fell dumb when not expressly preaching God's message (Jeremiah 3:26-27 ; Jeremiah 24:27). In a time of crisis, no other words were worth speaking.

Individual and Corporate Responsibility

Many scholars assert, on the basis of chapter 18, that Ezekiel was a pioneer in developing the doctrine of individual responsibility. Following the lead of H. Wheeler Robinson, interpreters assert that earlier Israel was dominated by the idea of corporate responsibility and corporate guilt, whereby the guilt of the father could be transferred to the descendants. The classic example of this is said to be Joshua 7, where Achan's family shares in the guilt of his actions and are put to death.

In chapter 18 Ezekiel confronts the popular proverb of his time, "The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (v. 2). The self-evident meaning is that the children suffer inevitably and unfairly for their father's actions. The implication is that God is unjust.

Ezekiel, speaking in God's name, responds first that every individual belongs to God and is responsible to him directly and not through his or her parents (v. 4). He then vies a hypothetical case involving three generations. If a man in the first generation lives a life of faithfulness, generosity, and integrity, that man will stand justified before God and suffer no retribution (vv. 5-9). If his son, the second generation, does not follow that path but lives a life of greed, apostasy, and selfishness, then that son will not be justified through the righteousness of

his father. He will bear the full weight of his sin (vv. 10-13). If then this man's son, the third generation, reacts against his father's immoral ways and lives instead like his grandfather, this man will not suffer for his father's sin but will stand justified (vv. 14-18).

To this, Ezekiel adds the principle that if a sinful person repents, God will no longer hold that person's former sins against him. On the other hand, if a righteous person falls away and behaves corruptly, the former Acts of righteousness will not protect that one from punishment (vv. 19-32). Ezekiel has laid out in clearest terms not only the idea of individual responsibility but also the possibility of repentance and the necessity of perseverance.

It is another question, however, whether Ezekiel's ideas represent a major break from previous Old Testament teachings. In the case of Achan's sin, it is not at all clear that the Israelites regarded either the entire nation or Achan's family as sharing in his guilt. While they knew that the whole people had suffered for what he had done (Joshua 7:4-5), the mere fact that they sought out the guilty individual (Joshua 7:13-19) indicates that they understood that the responsibility lay with one man. Also, the fact that they executed Achan's family along with him (Joshua 7:24-26), however that may strike us, does not mean that they thought that his guilt was somehow passed on to them. Rather, the point of Achan's punishment was that he lost his place in the inheritance of the land of Israel. Had his family survived and taken a share in the land, then in their eyes he would have through his descendants evaded the real point of the punishment. The guilt was his and the punishment was directed toward him.

In short, Ezekiel enunciated more clearly than before certain principles of divine judgment and human responsibility, and he corrected the misunderstandings of his contemporaries. It would not be accurate, however, to suppose that he repudiated earlier tenets of Israel's faith. Rather, he made the point that the Jews who saw their temple go up in flames had no one to blame but themselves.

Apostasy

More than any other prophet, Ezekiel graphically portrays the perversity and effrontery of apostasy. Here, too, the fall of the temple is before him, since it is the gravity of Israel's sin that explains how God could have allowed the temple to fall.

In chapter 23 using the most graphic sexual imagery found anywhere in the Bible, Ezekiel set out the parable of the sisters Oholah and Oholibah. Oholah, he tells us, represents Samaria just as Oholibah represents Jerusalem. Oholah first

turned away from Yahweh, her true husband, and "lusted after" Assyria and Egypt. In response to her adultery, Yahweh turned her over to the viciousness of the Assyrians (Jeremiah 23:5-10); in other words, God allowed Assyria to destroy Samaria.

Oholibah learned nothing from her sister's experience but instead behaved even worse. She committed adultery with the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians out of a lust for their glory and strength. As a result, she too was doomed (Jeremiah 23:11-49).

The almost pornographic character of this parable serves several purposes. First, it vividly displays apostasy as an act as disgraceful and brazen as adultery. Second, it brings out the character of Israel's apostasy. When the Jews allowed themselves to be awestruck by the power of the great nations and sought alliances with them, they were in effect turning their back on God in the way a wayward wife might abandon her husband for a rich and handsome paramour. In addition, alliances with these nations inevitably drew Israel into the worship of their gods (Jeremiah 23:30). Third, the parable illustrates the folly of Jerusalem, in that its people did not learn the lessons vividly acted out before them in the destruction of Samaria. Guilty of such outrageous behavior, the people hardly had a right to be surprised when they saw judgment bearing down on their city and temple.

In chapter 8, Ezekiel describes the apostasy that was being committed in the temple itself. He tells us that in the sixth month of the sixth year (about five years before the destruction of Jerusalem), he was taken to the temple in a vision. There in the very house of God Ezekiel saw several examples of Jerusalem's apostasy.

First, he saw the "idol of jealousy" in the north gate (vv. 5-6). This may have been an image of Asherah (cf. 2 Kings 21:7). Its position in the north is significant since that is the direction from which Israel's enemies, as executioners of Yahweh's anger, generally came.

Next, he went into a secret room where the elders were worshiping images of animal gods (vv. 7-12). The zoomorphic nature of these gods would indicate that they were Egyptian; the secrecy of the cult reflected a desire to hide it not only from Yahweh but from the Babylonians, who would have regarded this as an act of rebellion against their empire. The Jews would soon learn that Egyptian help was empty.

Next, again at the north gate, he saw women "mourning for Tammuz" (v. 14). Tammuz was a dying and rising fertility god, and his adoration was meant to ensure success in agriculture. In this, the people had abandoned Yahweh as Lord of nature and turned to other gods for good crops and healthy cattle.

Finally, Ezekiel sees men on the east side of the temple bowing to the rising sun with their backs to the temple (vv. 16-17). The implication is that as they bow they turn their buttocks toward Yahweh. The phrase translated "putting a branch to their nose" should probably be translated, "they put a stench in my (God's) nose."

The outcome of apostasy is that God shows no pity (v. 18). For Ezekiel's readers, the reason for the destruction of the temple is obvious.

Oracles against the Nations

Like many other prophets, Ezekiel includes a series of oracles against the nations in his book (25:1-32:32). Here, however, these prophecies take on the added urgency of being set against the crisis of 586 b.c. Against Ammon, for example (Jeremiah 25:1-7), Ezekiel makes the point that because they gloated over the fall of the Jerusalem sanctuary, God would hand them and all their possessions over to foreigners from the east.

Especially remarkable here are the lengthy laments over Tyre (26:1-28:19), a place of special significance because it was Tyre that built the Jerusalem temple (1 Kings 5:1-11). Using imagery that would have been meaningful for a priest, Ezekiel describes the king of Tyre as if he were a cherub statue standing in the holy of holies (28:13-14 ; cf. 2 Chronicles 3:10-13). God would expel them from their seaside paradise and put an end to their wealth and trade.

For Ezekiel, the oracles against the nations meant that the same God who had condemned Jerusalem also stood in judgment over the nations. If the people of God had not escaped, neither would they.

Redemption and Transformation

For Ezekiel, the sovereignty of God, whereby he was free to judge Jerusalem and destroy its temple, was also the basis for Jerusalem's hope. The destruction of the temple did not mean that God had failed or that the promises were finished.

In chapter 37, Ezekiel lays out three aspects of the hope of restoration. He begins with the famous vision of the valley of dry bones (vv. 1-14). Israel, the

vision implies, is a dead nation. Like many peoples before them, they have been swept off the historical map, and from the human viewpoint there is no reason to expect them ever to be a nation again. God, however, is not bound by human limitations, and this dead nation will live again.

Second, in a text that parallel's the promise in Jeremiah 31:31-37 of a new covenant with Israel and Judah, Ezekiel promises that God will draw together his people and give to them an obedient heart that they might never again wander from him (Jeremiah 37:15-23).

Third, Ezekiel promises that "David" will be their faithful ruler forever. The term "David" is symbolic and messianic; it looks for the day when a king will arise who will love God with all his heart and who will stand in stark contrast to the kings and leaders who led Jerusalem into its disastrous apostasy and warfare.

Gog and Magog

In a surprising turn, Ezekiel interrupts his prophecies of future redemption and glory with the prophecy of the great war against Gog and Magog (chaps. 38-39). This is not a prediction of some specific war, least of all of a war against a modern nation such as Russia. The terms "Magog, " "Meshech, " and so forth refer to tribes in the Black Sea area (such as the Scythians), but the specific identity is not nearly so important as the fact that they were pagan, warlike peoples in the north. Biblical eschatology regularly speaks of the "enemies to the north" as the source of conflict and judgment, and the reference here is typological rather than literal.

The main point was that although Israel had already endured much at the hands of its enemies, more sorrows were yet to come before they entered the kingdom. The events of 586 B.C. were terrible, but they were not the last or even the worst of such calamities. Still, God would triumph over his enemies, and final victory for the people of God remained sure.

The Restored Temple

We have seen that the entire prophecy of Ezekiel focuses on the theological crisis occasioned by the destruction of the temple. That being the case, it is not surprising that Ezekiel the priest should crown his promise of restoration with a vision of a new temple (chaps. 40-48). The question that remains for us is whether we should take this prophecy as a portrait of a literal, future temple, or read it as an idealized, symbolic vision.

Careful analysis reveals that this prophecy cannot be taken literally. Apart from the fact that, for a Christian, the notion of a future temple with a Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices bluntly contradicts the New Testament (e.g., Heb 8:1-10:17), the text of Ezekiel itself rules out such an interpretation.

Although the details of this chapter are perhaps exhausting to the modern reader, they are not really exhaustive. That is, they lack many specifications and dimensions, and omit such critical matters as the materials to be used (contrast Exod. 26 and 2 Chron. 3-4). Attempts to reconstruct a picture of this temple inevitably fail for lack of detail. Similarly, the portrayal of the division of the land among the twelve tribes (Ezek 47:13-48:35) is highly idealized and resists any attempt to set down literal borders for the tribes (although this does not keep some imaginative interpreters from trying).

Most significant here is the portrayal of the river of life in 47:1-12. Taken literally, the details are impossible. A trickle of water comes out of the north gate of the temple, but in the short space of a few thousand meters, it is a mighty river too great and apparently too swift for any man to swim across. Where the text itself signals us that the literal meaning implies absurdities, it is folly to force such a meaning on the passage.

The vision is a prophet-priest's portrayal of the glories of the kingdom of God. The calamity of the exile has been reversed. Worship is orderly and beautiful. Leadership is subservient to God. There is a place for every one of God's people, and there is neither want nor need. Most important of all, the Lord is there (Jeremiah 48:35). For the Christian, all the promises of God are Yes in Christ, and not one of them has failed.

Animal Sacrifices were not Redemptive

Animal sacrifices never took away sins. If Christ's sacrifice paid for sin once-for-all (and it did), why would there be animal sacrifices in God's kingdom in the future? But even that question raises another question: If Christ's sacrifice paid for sin once-for-all (and it did), why were there animal sacrifices in the Old Testament? Did they actually pay for sin? The Old Testament says that the sacrifices atoned for sin, but the author of Hebrews in speaking of the Old Testament sacrifices says, "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (10:4).

So how do we reconcile these two facts? I like to think as a comparison of the O.T. sacrifices as today's use of checks. In the O.T. the only way to pay was with checks. But a check is worthless without money in the account. Jesus' sacrifice is the money in the bank account needed to pay the bill. In the O.T. the

checks paid the bill and were necessary to pay it. But then again, the check is just a piece of paper and is worthless without the money in the bank! So while there was no other way to be forgiven besides the animal sacrifices, they were really an expression of faith in the deposit that would be made in Messiah.

The same is true of sacrifices in the kingdom. Both O.T. and kingdom sacrifices point to the only sacrifice that ever had the ability to pay for sin.

Images and symbols are explained in Scripture

So with the primary obstacle out of the way, does the Bible teach that there will be a future physical temple in God's kingdom or is the future temple described in a way that is meant to be interpreted symbolically? Before we dive into the text directly, let us investigate how images and symbols are used in Scripture.

I argue that our goal in interpretation is to seek to understand what the original hearers of the text would have understood as images and symbols, and what they would have taken at face value. When imagery and symbolism occur in Scripture, they almost always are accompanied by explanation or interpretation. Otherwise, how would the readers know what the text was supposed to mean?

Let me give one simple example. In Daniel 8, in an apocalyptic passage, there is a story about a ram and a goat. Read the chapter, and you'll see that this is symbolic. But the text clearly explains what the symbols of the ram and the goat represent (8:20-21). So this clearly apocalyptic passage turns out in fact to be an incredibly accurate prophecy of many years of Medo-Persian and Greek history that actually happened (involving Alexander the Great and the kings after him)!

So while there is symbolism in Scripture, just because there is a symbol doesn't take away from the face value meaning of the text as a whole because the text explains the meaning of the symbols. That is how even crazy apocalyptic passages with flying goats can accurately prophecy of the future. Likewise, when we investigate example after example of passages with symbolic imagery we see that the text explains what these symbols mean explicitly so that the readers could understand what the text was saying.

A lot more could be said on this topic as we have barely scratched the surface, but I at least wanted to briefly outline how I approach this question. I will do one more post showing how this applies to the way we look at Ezekiel 40-48 and then examine what I believe to be two even clearer texts that talk about a future temple in the kingdom. Feel free to chime in below with your thoughts as we spur one another on to think carefully about the text!

Ezekiel explains the images he uses

So how does this bear on our reading of Ezekiel 40-48? When Ezekiel uses symbolic imagery, he also explains what the symbols represent. The vision of the flaming chariot throne in chapter 1 is explained to represent a vision of the glory of Yahweh. The riddle about an eagle and a cedar in chapter 17 is explained in detail. The two harlots in Ezekiel 23 are explained to be Samaria and Jerusalem. The valley of dry bones in chapter 37 is explained to represent the nation of Israel, etc.

Ezekiel spends nine chapters describing the temple, the priests, and the sacrificial system in great detail. And yet as far as I can see there is no hint in the text itself that it is not to be understood at face value. So how could the original readers come to any conclusion other than that God was promising to one day dwell with His people in a restored and renewed temple?

And if the original readers could only have understood God to be promising that one day He would rebuild the temple, is God's faithfulness on the line to keep His promise? Ultimately, that is why I think this issue is worth discussing. Debating the intricacies of how or when future events will happen has little value for us to speculate on. But discussing and more accurately understanding what God has promised and how He will keep those promises gives us greater assurance in His faithfulness.

Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people with a future temple

In Haggai 2:6-7 God says,

“For thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. ‘I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

The people in Haggai's day were discouraged because the temple that they were building didn't seem significant. But God reassured them that the very temple they were building would one day be filled with glory. The very rocks that they laid down in restoring that temple are still in the temple mount today. And one day they will be incorporated into God's future temple. How encouraging this would have been to them to know that their work had actual significance. But if there isn't going to be a future temple, how does this encouragement from God have any bearing on their work? God's logic here was: “Keep working on this temple for one day your work will be incorporated into God's glorious future temple.”

Likewise, God says in Zechariah 6:12-13,

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. ‘Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honour and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.’”

Just like in Haggai, here we see God giving the people encouragement that God’s plan would be brought to fulfilment. He will bring in His kingdom. That kingdom will be marked by perfect peace and justice as evidenced by the fact that the Messiah will be a priest-king. He will be perfectly righteous in His perfect sovereignty. And He is the one who will build God’s temple. I don’t see how the original hearers of Zechariah could have separated the face-value promise of the coming of the king priest from what He was coming to do, to build God’s glorious temple. And the text then assures the readers that when this prophecy comes true, they will know that Yahweh sent the Messiah as a vindication of His promise (6:15).

So the very logic that Haggai and Zechariah use to encourage the people depend upon taking the promise of the future temple at face value. I argue that the people in their day could only have understood these texts as a promise of a future temple and so we should take the promises in the same way.

New Jerusalem fulfils the concept of temple

I fully agree with some scholars that the final fulfilment of the concept of temple is in the New Jerusalem. This is when God in His fullness, like never before, will dwell with His people. This is the final hope to which the temple ultimately points. In fact, Revelation 21 presents this final phase in God’s plan as new and absolutely unique: “Behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them.” And “I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” But I believe John is contrasting the uniqueness of this final temple-less phase with what came before. Put another way, John shows us the physical temple in 11:1-2 that he specifically emphasizes is done away with in chapter 21, and so the most natural reading keeps it present in Christ’s reign in 20:1-6.

It is true that there are a lot of issues more important than whether or not there will be a physical temple in God’s future kingdom! But it is still good for us to wrestle so that we can more clearly understand God’s unchanging Word.

I explored the question of how Ezekiel’s prophecy about a future temple will be fulfilled. We saw that it’s unlikely that it was fulfilled in the second temple built in 515 B.C., and it’s also unlikely that it will be fulfilled in a literal temple in the

future. Admittedly, those two views have much more to offer than I have been able to give here in these posts. In any case, rather than critiquing those views any further, I want to spend this third and final post defending the view that I believe carries the most Scriptural support.

Put simply: Ezekiel's temple prophecy (Ezek 40-48) is being fulfilled partially through the church and will ultimately be fulfilled through the New Jerusalem (Rev 21-22).

One of the most widespread descriptions of the church is that it is (or we are) the temple of God. Peter says it (1 Pet 2:4-5). Hebrews hints at it (Heb 12:22-

Cor. 3:16; Eph 2:21). We sometimes talk about our individual bodies as the temple, but Paul only says this in one verse (1 Cor. 6:19). In every other occasion where Paul calls "you" or "us" the temple, he's referring to the church.

Now, you may think that Paul is simply drawing an analogy between the temple and church and not saying that the church is the *fulfilment* of Ezekiel's prophecy. And this may be true, though I think it ignores how biblical theology works (see my second post). But is there really no connection between the church and Ezekiel's prophecy? Actually there is. In 2 Corinthians 6:16 Paul says:

"We are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people'."

Paul calls the church "the temple of the living God" and then quotes Ezekiel 37:27 to prove it. That phrase "I will make my dwelling among them..." comes right out of Ezekiel. Now, it doesn't come from Ezekiel 40-48—Paul seems to have fallen a few chapters short. However, Ezekiel 37:27 points forward to Ezekiel 40-48. Look up the commentaries, consult a few Ezekiel scholars, and you'll see that everyone who's studied the book sees an integral connection between Ezekiel 37:27 and Ezekiel 40-48. So, Paul calls the church the temple and then cites a verse from Ezekiel that points to the temple in 40-48 to prove his point. So even though Paul never quite says, "Look, dudes, the church fulfils Ezekiel's temple prophecy, so get over your fear of non-literal prophecies..." I think there's good biblical grounds to see such a connection strongly implied, if not suggested, in 2 Corinthians 6.

But the church is only a partial fulfilment of Ezekiel's temple. The ultimate fulfilment comes in Revelation 21-22, where John describes our final state as a city called the "New Jerusalem."

Now, mentioning the New Jerusalem opens up a whole other can of worms. Is it a literal city? Is it a metaphor? If a metaphor, what's the metaphor of? We cannot possibly answer all these questions. I think the New Jerusalem is at least a metaphor for the glorified church. Indeed, Revelation 21:9-10 (along with Heb 12:22-24) seems to demand this. But I also think the New Jerusalem could represent the new creation as a whole. In any case, the main point about the New Jerusalem is that God's presence is there. That's why Revelation 21-22 feels a lot like Genesis 1-2. God's presence that dwelt in Eden has returned to beautify His creation and dwell with humanity as He originally intended it. That is why the New Jerusalem is a perfect cube. The only other cube in the Bible was the holy of holies, a perfect cube, the place where God's presence dwelt on earth.

What does this have to do with Ezekiel's temple? What's fascinating is that when John describes the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22, *he constantly uses imagery from Ezekiel 40-48*. For instance:

- Ezekiel is transported to a high mountain in a vision (Ezek 40:2) and so is John in Revelation (Rev 21:10).
- Ezekiel has an angelic guide with a measuring rod (Ezek 40:3) and so does John (Rev 21:15-17).
- Ezekiel sees a river of life (Ezek 47:1-12) and so does John (Rev 22:1-2).
- Ezekiel's temple is a perfect square and John's city is a perfect cube (Rev 21:16).
- Ezekiel emphasizes purity and holiness (Ezek 40-42) and John does as well (Rev 21:27)
- Ezekiel emphasizes God's glory dwelling in the temple (43:1-9) as does John (Rev 21:3-4).

I could keep going, but you get the point. When John paints a picture of the New Jerusalem he dips his brush in the imagery, language, and symbols of Ezekiel's temple to do so. To add to this, John never quotes from the Old Testament in Revelation. Rather, he alludes to it. (Did you catch the difference?) The most common way that John says "this is being fulfilled in..." is *not* to quote from the O.T. directly, but to use phrases and images from, say, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. So it's not just coincidence that he clothes the New Jerusalem with temple imagery from Ezekiel. He's making a specific point, a point about fulfillment.

So why did God reveal to Ezekiel a temple and animal sacrifices? Because God wanted to communicate to Ezekiel about the return of God's presence and the

atonement of sin *through the only categories that Ezekiel knew*. When Ezekiel (and his audience) thought about God's presence, they thought about a temple. When they conceived of atonement, they thought about lambs and goats. So for God to tell Ezekiel that these things would be restored, he used the categories of temple and sacrifice, even though God knew that He would fulfil His promise in a much greater—much more powerful and intimate—way.

I will end this paragraph with an analogy. Imagine that God send you back in time to tell some great US president as Abraham Lincoln that there will be “internet and email” in the future. Internet and Email? How in the world would that he was familiar with that correlated with the truth you were trying to convey. I don't know, maybe you would tell him that in the future there will be postmen that ride horses at 500 miles per hour. Or maybe you'd tell him about a train that would travel from Brussels to Moscow direct in less than a day. *Fast Communication*. That's what you're trying to communicate.

God dwelling with His people; God definitively atoning for sin; God restoring His creation (hence the magical river of Ezekiel 47). These are the truths that God gave Ezekiel. And He communicated these truths to his people through the only categories that sixth century Israelites could comprehend.

I argued above that a literal fulfilment of Ezekiel 40-48 is tough to reconcile with the New Testament. Specifically, even though Ezekiel talks about a future temple, the fact that this temple comes with a sacrificial system that bears atoning value runs roughshod against the New Testament. Christ is our sacrificial atonement, and therefore there's no reason to sacrifice animals any longer.

But there's another problem with the literal, or Dispensational¹, view. And this problem has to do with a biblical theology of temple. Here's what I mean.

¹ Since the positions and conclusions in Endtimes.org are in line with the Dispensational System of Theology, or point of view, the terms need to be explained. There is no need to fear these terms. They describe some simple concepts related to our understanding of the Old Testament Covenants and how God will develop His kingdom program. Even if you have negative feelings about the term *Dispensationalism*, please go through the following brief explanation of what it is. It could be that it has never been clearly explained. Dispensationalism has influenced the doctrinal beliefs of many churches, including the Baptist church, the Bible churches, the Pentecostal churches, and many other non-denominational Evangelical churches. You may even be Dispensational in your thinking although not be calling yourself a Dispensationalist. Christian is always a better term, but terms like *Dispensationalist* helps to define where we are coming from when it comes to our views on Endtimes and the present and future Kingdom of God.

Biblical theology looks at how God's revelation unfolds, and it studies how various theological themes progress throughout Scripture. Now, the temple is where God's presence dwells, but God's presence first dwelt on earth in Eden. But Adam and Eve sinned and were kicked out of God's presence. They were kicked out of Eden. But God's desire to dwell with humanity overcomes our sin. And so he makes provisions to dwell with humanity once again. He makes provisions for Israel to build a tabernacle (Exodus 25-31, 25-40). After dwelling in the tabernacle for a few hundred years, God moves into a temple—a more permanent, and much more glorious, habitation (1 Kings 5-8). But for hundreds of years Israel lives in sin and breaks the covenant (Jer. 11). So God leaves the temple (Ezek 8-11) and remains distant from Israel.

Ezekiel is a wild book. It's filled with hair-raising visions, offensive language, and sexual images that make translators blush, which is why there is not a single literal English translation of, say, Ezekiel 16 and 23. Then, as if we didn't have enough to wrestle with, this other-worldly book ends with a prophecy about a future temple (Ezek 40-48, esp. 40-43). In short, Ezekiel has a vision where he follows a "man...with a measuring cord in his hand" (40:2-3), who goes around measuring a temple (chapters. 40-42). He then sees the glory of God return to the temple (43:1-5) and the priestly sacrificial system re-instituted (43:13-46:24).

Now, from an old covenant perspective, there's nothing odd about this. God's presence dwells in a temple and sin is atoned for by killing animals. But from a

Definition

- A Dispensation - The system by which anything is administered. In Christian terms, looking back, it refers to a period in history whereby God dealt with man in a specific way. (Conscience, Law, Grace)
- Dispensationalism - A system of theology that sees God working with man in different ways during different dispensations. While 'Dispensations' are not ages, but stewardships, or administrations, we tend to see them now as ages since we look back on specific time periods when they were in force.
- Dispensationalism is distinguished by three key principles:
 1. A clear distinction between God's program for Israel and God's program for the Church.
 2. A consistent and regular use of a literal principle of interpretation.
 3. The understanding of the purpose of God as His own glory rather than the salvation of mankind.

new covenant perspective, you should be a bit troubled by the idea of rebuilding the temple and sacrificing animals *after* Jesus has died as the ultimate sacrifice—a death that tore the curtain of the temple in two.

So how is Ezekiel's prophecy fulfilled?

Some say that it was fulfilled in 515 B.C. That's the year that Israel rebuilt the temple after they returned home from exile. The only problem is that the measurements taken in Ezekiel 40-42 do not match the temple that was built in 515 B.C. Not even close. So Ezekiel is probably looking beyond the temple that existed after exile (this would include Herod's extreme temple makeover in the first century).

Therefore, Dispensationalists would say that Ezekiel's prophecy must be literally fulfilled at some future time. And since there's no temple in the church age, and since there will be no temple in the final state (Rev. 21:22), Ezekiel's temple must be rebuilt during the thousand year reign of Christ. Now, to be clear, the few verses that mention Christ's thousand-year reign (Rev. 20:2-7) don't talk about a temple. And again, when the thousand years are up, there will be no temple (Rev. 21:22). The fulfilment of Ezekiel 40-48, therefore, is more implied than explicitly stated, according to this view.

The strength of the Dispensational view lies in the specific measurements given in Ezekiel 40-42. If Ezekiel had given some general, off-handed prophecy about a future temple, then perhaps he wasn't thinking of a literal building. But when the angel shows him a temple, he gives him very specific measurements of it. One would assume, therefore, that God intends to fulfil his prophecy (or vision) literally.

Despite the strength of this argument, and despite the fact that I was taught this view in school, and despite the fact that I have many friends and theologians much smarter than I who still hold to this view, I believe it's incorrect. I believe that there's much stronger biblical evidence that supports a non-structural fulfilment (I'll explain later) of Ezekiel's temple prophecy. But before I explain this, let's look at one main problem with the Dispensational view.

Ezekiel 43-46 says there'll be sacrifices that go along with the new temple.

“Yes,” says the Dispensationalist, “but the animal sacrifices at the millennial temple (i.e. Ezekiel's temple) will not carry *atonement value*. They will simply be a memorial in which we will remember the sacrifice of Christ.”

I guess this is a bit better, though I'm still not sure the author of Hebrews would be cool with this. In any case, there's still a big problem—Ezekiel says that the animal sacrifices will be for atonement, *not* as a memorial.

“And one sheep from every flock...to *make atonement* for them” (45:15)

“He shall provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to *make atonement* on behalf of the house of Israel” (45:17).

And many other passages agree. So, while I appreciate the desire to see the animal sacrifices as non-atonement, the Dispensational view smuggles a *non-literal* Ezekiel 45:15, 17 and many other passages that speak of atonement.

So I agree and disagree with this view. I agree that God will fulfil Ezekiel’s temple-oriented sacrificial system *non-literally*. But I disagree that the rest of Ezekiel 40-48 must be interpreted literally. Why would it be? If the New Testament demands a *non-literal* reading of the sacrificial system in Ezekiel 43-46, then why can’t we also take a *non-literal* reading of the future temple in Ezekiel 40-42?

I argued that a literal fulfilment of Ezekiel 40-48 is tough to reconcile with the New Testament. Specifically, even though Ezekiel talks about a future temple, the fact that this temple comes with a sacrificial system that bears atoning value runs roughshod against the New Testament. Christ is our sacrificial atonement, and therefore there’s no reason to sacrifice animals any longer.

But there’s another problem with the literal, or Dispensational, view. And this problem has to do with a biblical theology of temple. Here’s what I mean.

Biblical theology looks at how God’s revelation unfolds, and it studies how various theological themes progress throughout Scripture. Now, the temple is where God’s presence dwells, but God’s presence first dwelt on earth in Eden. But Adam and Eve sinned and were kicked out of God’s presence. They were kicked out of Eden. But God’s desire to dwell with humanity overcomes our sin. And so he makes provisions to dwell with humanity once again. He makes provisions for Israel to build a tabernacle (Exodus 25-31, 25-40). After dwelling in the tabernacle for a few hundred years, God moves into a temple—a more permanent, and much more glorious, habitation (1 Kings 5-8). But for hundreds of years Israel lives in sin and breaks the covenant (Jer. 11). So God leaves the temple (Ezek 8-11) and remains distant from Israel.

Eden, Tabernacle, Temple—exile. This is a biblical theology of temple. And it continues.

When Jesus comes on the scene, John says that He “tabernacled among us” (John 1:14). In other words, the presence of God that left the temple returned in Jesus! The full manifestation of God (John 1:17-18)! And Jesus *is* the temple (John 2:19). He is the physical presence of God on earth. But then Jesus dies, is

raised, and ascends to the Father, but this is to our advantage (John 16:17) because He has given us His Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells in the church and we—the church—are therefore “the temple of the living God” (2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor 3:16; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:21; 1 Pet 2:4-5).

Eden, Tabernacle, Temple—exile—Jesus, Church. The temple theme continues...

When Christ returns and ushers in His new creation—the New Jerusalem—there will be “no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (Rev 21:22). Why have a temple, where God’s presence is walled off from the people, when God can dwell with His people without separation?

Eden, Tabernacle, Temple—exile—Jesus, Church, and *New Jerusalem*! God desires to dwell with humanity, and He will achieve this goal! This is the storyline of Scripture.

So, what’s the purpose of a literal, structural temple? It’s to enable a holy God to dwell with sinful people. A temple, with its walls, allows the presence of God to dwell with mankind without *annihilating* them. The temple (or tabernacle) is a necessary way to enable a holy God to dwell with sinful people. There’s still a relationship, but it’s a less intimate one. That’s why Jesus is called both a tabernacle and a temple—the visible presence of God on earth.

Notice that in this “biblical theology of temple” there’s an *escalation*. It keeps getting better and better as the narrative unfolds—tabernacle, temple, Jesus, and so on. And this is where my critique of the Dispensational view comes in. If a physical temple is a less intimate way for God to dwell with His people, then does it make theological sense for us to rebuild a physical temple in the millennial kingdom? We’ve been on the escalator since we were kicked out of Eden—tabernacle, temple, Jesus, church. Will we go down the escalator in the millennial kingdom to worship God in a physical temple only to get back on it again to get to the New Jerusalem? Will Jesus stitch together the temple curtain? Why would we enjoy unmediated access to the throne room through the Spirit (Heb 4), and an even greater access to God in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22), and yet a restricted, walled-off access to God in the millennial kingdom?

Again, the New Testament never says that we will worship God at a temple in the millennial kingdom. Rather, it’s a commitment to a literal reading of Ezekiel 40-48 that gets us there. But perhaps Ezekiel’s temple prophecy—like the sacrificial system—will not be fulfilled literally?

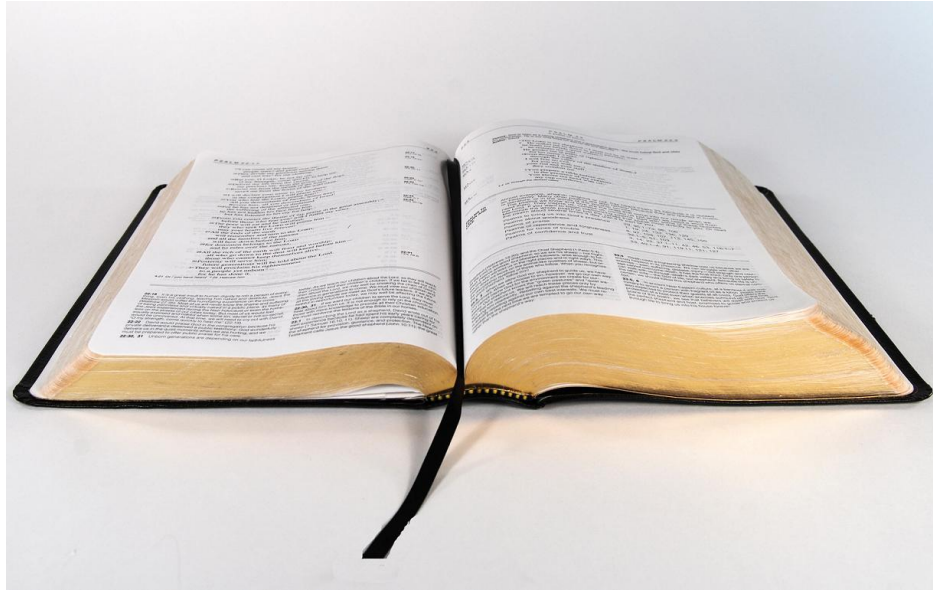
Perhaps God will fulfil His vision to Ezekiel in a much greater, much unexpected way where His presence will dwell with humanity without walls. Perhaps Ezekiel's temple will be fulfilled *in* the New Jerusalem.

I could keep going, but you get the point. When John paints a picture of the New Jerusalem he dips his brush in the imagery, language, and symbols of Ezekiel's temple to do so. To add to this, John never quotes from the Old Testament in Revelation. Rather, he alludes to it. (Did you catch the difference?) The most common way that John says "this is being fulfilled in..." is *not* to quote from the OT directly, but to use phrases and images from, say, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. So it's not just coincidence that he clothes the New Jerusalem with temple imagery from Ezekiel. He's making a specific point, a point about fulfilment.

So why did God reveal to Ezekiel a temple and animal sacrifices? Because God wanted to communicate to Ezekiel about the return of God's presence and the atonement of sin *through the only categories that Ezekiel knew*. When Ezekiel (and his audience) thought about God's presence, they thought about a temple. When they conceived of atonement, they thought about lambs and goats. So for God to tell Ezekiel that these things would be restored, he used the categories of temple and sacrifice, even though God knew that He would fulfil His promise in a much greater—much more powerful and intimate—way.

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God dwelling with His people; God definitively atoning for sin; God restoring His creation (hence the magical river of Ezekiel 47). These are the truths that God gave Ezekiel. And He communicated these truths to his people through the only categories that sixth century Israelites could comprehend.



The Messianic Prophecies in Ezekiel and Daniel

Ezekiel

Introduction from the Book of Ezekiel itself

Ezekiel 3:17-19. Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked [man] shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Ezekiel 28:6-10. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of [them that are] slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I [am] God? but thou [shalt be] a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken [it], saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 43:1-4. Afterward he brought me to the gate, [even] the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way

of the east: and his voice [was] like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And [it was] according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, [even] according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions [were] like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect [is] toward the east.

Bible Survey – Ezekiel

Hebrew Name - *Yehezqel* "God is strength"

Greek Name - *Iezekiel* (Greek form of the Hebrew)

Author - Ezekiel (According to Tradition)

Date - 595 BC Approximately

Theme - The final restoration of Israel

Types and Shadows - In Ezekiel Jesus is the son of man

Summary of the Book of Ezekiel

Rapid Overview of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel prophesied to the Jewish captives in Babylon. The Babylonians had invaded Judah three times and each time they took prisoners back to Babylon. The first invasion was in 607 BC and Daniel was taken as a captive to Babylon. The second invasion was in 597 BC and Ezekiel was taken as a captive to Babylon, and in 586 BC Jerusalem was destroyed and all the survivors were taken as captives to Babylon. Ezekiel was married to a beautiful woman who was "the desire of his eyes" and God told him but his beloved wife was going to die on the very same day that Jerusalem was to be destroyed. As a sign to the Jews a cure was commanded not to mourn his wife's death. He was to prepare himself as God had prepared himself for the death of his beloved city (Ezekiel 24:15-22). God spoke many prophecies through Ezekiel using words, parables, visions, and similitude's (strange things to point to something greater). Ezekiel also prophesied about the false shepherds in Jerusalem and God said that he will be the true Shepherd Messiah and there will be a future outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a re-gathering of Israel in the land. Ezekiel also predicted the downfall of those nations that were hostile to Judah. Ezekiel 16 is probably the most remarkable chapter concerning the love of God for his people in spite of their continuing idolatry.

"Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD. "But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it." Ezekiel 16:14-15

The prophet Ezekiel taken captive during the time when the Babylonians began their captivity of Judah during the time of the reign of king Jehoichin, which was about 11 years before Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. Ezekiel was one of the Jewish captives who was brought to the land of Babylon and settled on the banks of the river Chebar. While he was by this river and the "land of the Chaldeans" he had a prophetic vision and received his call to be a prophet to the people in exile. This all happened in the fourth month of the "fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity" (595 BC). There is one interesting note that Ezekiel makes when he mentions that he married a woman in the land of Babylon and had a house, and that he lost his wife on the very day that the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem took place. Something else that is interesting is that the prophecies of Ezekiel address the Jews in Jerusalem and the events taking place over there, as though he was in Jerusalem, but he was actually in Babylon.

According to Jewish tradition Ezekiel was murdered in Babylon by a Jewish prince whom Ezekiel accused of idolatry, Ezekiel was supposedly buried on the banks of the Euphrates River.

The major divisions within the book of Ezekiel reveal the purpose of this ministry. In the first half of the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1-33) Judah is accused of breaking all of God's commandments, and they are warned by God that they will be destroyed if they persist in their sins. After Ezekiel's announcement of Jerusalem's destruction the book of Ezekiel focuses on an entirely different subject, which is one of comfort and encouragement to the heartbroken Jews.

Outline Ezekiel

Theme: Restoring the Spiritual Heart of the Nation - The Glory of God

Key Verse: "You shall know that I am the LORD." (Ezekiel 6:7b)

I. The Prophet's Call (*Ezekiel 1-3*)

- A. Seeing God's Glory (*Ezekiel 1*)
- B. Hearing God's Word (*Ezekiel 2*)
- C. Becoming God's Watchman (*Ezekiel 3*)

II. The Fall of Jerusalem (*Ezekiel 4-24*)

- A. The Judgment Predicted (*Ezekiel 4-7*)
- B. God's Glory Departs (*Ezekiel 8-11*)
- C. Godless Leaders Exposed (*Ezekiel 12-17*)
- D. God's Justice Defended (*Ezekiel 18-21*)
- E. The End of the City (*Ezekiel 22-24*)

III. The Nations Judged (*Ezekiel 25-32*)

- A. Ammon (*Ezekiel 25:1-7*)
- B. Moab (*Ezekiel 25:8-11*)
- C. Edom (*Ezekiel 25:12-14*)
- D. Philistia (*Ezekiel 25:15-17*)
- E. Tyre (*Ezekiel 26:1-28:19*)
- F. Sidon (*Ezekiel 28:20-26*)
- G. Egypt (*Ezekiel 29-32*)

IV. The Glorious Future of Israel (*Ezekiel 33-48*)

- A. The City of Jerusalem Restored (*Ezekiel 33-34*)
- B. The Land of Israel Renewed (*Ezekiel 35-36*)
- C. The Nation of Israel Resurrected and Reunited (*Ezekiel 37-39*)
- D. The Temple and the Priesthood Reestablished (*Ezekiel 40-48*)

Introduction to Ezekiel

History and Background of Ezekiel

Theme of Book: The Glory of God. The Hebrew word for Glory has the idea of heaviness. "*Chebod*"

Key phrase: "And ye shall know that I am the LORD your God" (used 70 times) God is called "**Lord God**" (over 400 times) and the phrase "**I am the Lord**" (59 times)

Context of Ezekiel: 2 Kings 24 and 25; 2 Chron. 36:1-21; Jeremiah 37:1; 38, 39.

About Ezekiel: Born around 622BC, taken captive **597BC**, began prophesying **592BC**, continuing on until about **571BC**. The name "**Ezekiel**" means the

“**strength of God,**” or “ **God strengthens**” in verb form. He is identified in verse 3 as “**The priest.**”

He is also called “**the son of Buzi.**” The Hebrew word “**Buzi**” is from the root word meaning “**to shame.**” Therefore, rabbinical scholars see Ezekiel as the son of men who allowed themselves to be shamed for the sake of God’s honor and glory! It is a positive testimony, not a negative one!

- **When** did it happen? Nineveh, the capital of Assyria was a great city that fell to the Babylonians (with the help of the Medes) in **612 BC**. Several of the Hebrew prophets speak about the “glory” of Nineveh.
- The Chaldean leader, **Nabopolassar (625-605 BC)**, not only led the armies in 612 BC, but he also, along with the help of the Medes drove out the forces of Assyria and Egypt once for all in 610 BC.
- His famous son, **Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC)** was the general who pulled off one of the greatest victories over Assyria, aided by Egypt, of the ancient world at the Battle of Carchemish in the first year of his reign – **605 BC**, a victory recorded in

Jeremiah 46:2.

It was **Jehoiakim**, Josiah’s second son - he had at least 4- called Eliakim, who was made a vassal of Babylon. At that time, Nebuchadnezzar took some nobility, including Daniel and his three friends to Babylon.

In **598-597 BC**, **Jehoiakim rebelled** against Babylon, bringing Nebuchadnezzar’s forces against Jerusalem. His son, **Jehoiachin, was installed, for three months, in the place of his father who was killed.** Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin and several leaders (**including Ezekiel**) off to Babylon to a **Jewish colony on the Chebar canal.**

Described by the word river in the Bible, it was actually a canal. We know from history that a Jewish colony was located by this canal.

In **Jehoiachin’s place, 597BC**, **Nebuchadnezzar put Josiah’s, fourth son, Mattaniah**, as king - whom **he renamed Zedekiah. Zedekiah in 589 BC** joined with Tyre, Ammon, and Edom, **in a revolt** against Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar responded with rage against Judah and finally the city of Jerusalem, destroying it along with Solomon’s temple in 586 BC. Zedekiah was captured, saw his sons killed, and then had his eyes gouged out, *Jer. 39:7*, and was taken in chains to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar's general, **Nebuzaradan**, is the one who carried out the burning of Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon. It is fascinating to read in the Babylonian Chronicles an inscription which referred to Jehoiachin as "**the king of the land of Judah.**" No mention of Zedekiah.

When he was 30 years old "30th year, 4th month, 5th day".

NOTE: Jesus began his ministry at about 30 years of age. It was also the year when a priest would begin his official ministry (**Numbers 4:1-3, 23**) .

Apparently **Ezekiel was born around 622 BC, and was only 25 years old** when he was taken captive to Babylon.

Jeremiah had been preaching in Jerusalem for four years when Ezekiel was born. It is also possible that Daniel and Ezekiel were friends or acquaintances before the captivity.

When he was a captive in Babylon - *cf. Psalm 137* - "**5th year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, 5th day of the month**" – about **592 BC (about 6 years before the temple was destroyed.)**.

NOTE: The argument that Ezekiel was among the "**captives**" who were taken to Babylon in **597 BC**, along with King Jehoiachin is strengthened by **Ezekiel 33:21**.

Ezekiel refers to "**our captivity.**" He repeats this again in **Ezekiel 40:1**. Ezekiel was also married, and his wife died at the time of Jerusalem's fall – **Ezekiel 24:15-18**.

- Where was he at the time? "Among the captives by the river Chebar". It was a canal that went in a southeasterly direction, from the Euphrates and back to it. It was the area where the Jewish exiles were kept. "in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar (also spelled as Kevar)" - cf. Ezekiel 3:15 –Tel-Aviv
- What was this prophecy? It was a revelation from God Himself! "the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God"

NOTE: In Talmudic literature, these "visions" are known as Maaseh Merkavah which means "the work of the Chariot." It was a response directed specifically to Ezekiel! "The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel" (used 50 times in the book) It was a realization of God's presence! "the hand of the LORD was there upon him" (cf. Ezekiel 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1).

The contents of the book may also be analyzed further as follows :

I. Israel's sin and impending judgment, uttered before the final captivity (Ezekiel 1-24).

1) Biographical information concerning Ezekiel, including a note as to his personal situation and a description of his call to the prophetic ministry (Ezekiel 1-3).

2) The siege of Jerusalem portrayed in four symbolical acts (Ezekiel 4-7). In the first of these, Ezekiel evidently drew a picture of a city under siege, indicating that this was soon to be the condition of Jerusalem. After this, Ezekiel lay on his side for a great number of days, announcing that the nation was to be punished for its sins. By eating an inferior type of food which had been cooked on animal dung, Ezekiel predicted the famine which would accompany the siege. In the final act, Ezekiel shaved his head, burning his hair, striking it with a sword and scattering it to the winds, indicating the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Ezekiel 6 and 7 contain additional oracles concerning Israel's sin and imminent doom.

3) Visions of idolatry in Jerusalem and the resultant judgment and destruction of that city (Ezekiel 8-11).

4) Further prophecies against Jerusalem (Ezekiel 12-24). This section contains a rebuke of false prophets and hypocrites (Ezekiel 12-14), a repeated emphasis on the certainty and necessity of punishment (Ezekiel 15-17), a discussion of retribution and responsibility and a reassertion of God's love toward sinners (Ezekiel 18), a lamentation or dirge over the rulers of Judah (Ezekiel 19) and final warnings before the complete destruction of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 20-24).

II. Prophecies against the nations of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt (Ezekiel 25-32).

III. Prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel, uttered after the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

1) A discussion of the responsibility of the people to respond to the call of the prophet (Ezekiel 33: 1-20).

2) The announcement of the fall of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 33:21-33).

3) A contrast between the leadership of the faithless shepherds (kings) of Judah and Israel and the true shepherd who was to come (Ezekiel 34).

4) The doom of Edom (Ezekiel 35).

5) The vision of the valley of dry bones, symbolizing the resurrection of the remnant of Israel (Ezekiel 36-37).

6) The prophecy of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38-39).

7) The rebuilt Temple (Ezekiel 40-48).

The various Bible Dictionaries about Ezekiel

Ezekiel in Easton's Bible Dictionary

God will strengthen. (1.) 1 Chr. 24:16, "Jehezkel." (2.) One of the great prophets, the son of Buzi the priest (Ezek. 1:3). He was one of the Jewish exiles who settled at Tel-Abib, on the banks of the Chebar, "in the land of the Chaldeans." He was probably carried away captive with Jehoiachin (1:2; 2 Kings 24:14-16) about B.C. 597. His prophetic call came to him "in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity" (B.C. 594). He had a house in the place of his exile, where he lost his wife, in the ninth year of his exile, by some sudden and unforeseen stroke (Ezek. 8:1; 24:18). He held a prominent place among the exiles, and was frequently consulted by the elders (8:1; 11:25; 14:1; 20:1). His ministry extended over twenty-three years (29:17), B.C. 595-573, during part of which he was contemporary with Daniel (14:14; 28:3) and Jeremiah, and probably also with Obadiah. The time and manner of his death are unknown. His reputed tomb is pointed out in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, at a place called Keffil.

Ezekiel in Fausset's Bible Dictionary

"God will strengthen," Hebrew, Yehezqel. Son of Buzi (Ezekiel 1:3), a priest. Probably exercised the priestly office at Jerusalem before his departure in the captivity or transmigration (galut) of Jehoiachin, which took place 11 years before the city fell (2 Kings 24:15). His priestly character gave him much weight with his Hebrew fellow exiles. His priestly service was as real in the spiritual temple in Chaldaea as it had been in the visible temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel 11; Ezekiel 40-48; Ezekiel 4:13-14; Ezekiel 20:12-13). The priestly tone appears throughout his book, so that he is the priest among the prophets. Called to prophesy in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (595 B.C.) "in the 30th year

in the fourth month." i.e. the 30th from the era of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father (525 B.C.), an era he naturally uses writing in Babylonia (Farrar). But elsewhere he dates from Jehoiachin's captivity alone. This fact, and his expressly calling himself "the priest" (Ezekiel 1:3), favour the view that his mention of the 30th year of his own age is in order to mark his entering on a priestly ministry to his exiled countrymen (that being the usual age, Numbers 4:23; Numbers 4:30; "the heavens being opened" to him, as they were to his Antitype in beginning His ministry in His 30th year at Jordan, Luke 3:21-23). Thus, he would be 25 when carried away. The best of the people were apparently the first carried away (Ezekiel 11:16; Jeremiah 24:2-8; Jeremiah 24:10). Believing the prophets they obeyed Nebuchadnezzar's first summons to surrender, as the only path of safety. But the unbelieving were willing to do anything to remain in their native land; and despised their exiled brethren as having no share in the temple sacrifices...

Ezekiel in Smiths Bible Dictionary

(The strength of God), one of the four greater prophets, was the son of a priest named Buzi, and was taken captive in the captivity of Jehoiachin, eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was a member of a community of Jewish exiles who settled on the banks of the Chebar, a "river" or stream of Babylonia. He began prophesying B.C. 595, and continued until B.C. 573, a period of more than twenty-two years. We learn from an incidental allusion, Eze 24:18 that he was married, and had a house, Eze 8:1 in his place of exile, and lost his wife by a sudden and unforeseen stroke. He lived in the highest consideration among his companions in exile, and their elders consulted him on all occasions. He is said to have been buried on the banks of the Euphrates. The tomb, said to have been built by Jehoiachin, is shown, a few days journey from Bagdad. Ezekiel was distinguished by his stern and inflexible energy of will and character and his devoted adherence to the rites and ceremonies of his national religion. The depth of his matter and the marvellous nature of his visions make him occasionally obscure. Prophecy of Ezekiel. --The book is divided into two great parts, of which the destruction of Jerusalem is the turning-point. Chapters 1-24 contain predictions delivered before that event, and chs. 25-48 after it, as we see from ch. Eze 26:2 Again, chs. 1-32 are mainly occupied with correction, denunciation and reproof, while the remainder deal chiefly in consolation and promise. A parenthetical section in the middle of the book, chs. 25- 32, contains a group of prophecies against seven foreign nations, the septenary arrangement being apparently intentional. There are no direct quotations from Ezekiel in the New Testament, but in the Apocalypse there are many parallels and obvious allusions to the later chapters 40-48.

Ezekiel in the Picture Study Bible

Study Bible with information, images, and notes on many important subjects from the ancient world. Archaeological notes, geographical notes, ancient documents and manuscripts, cultural notes, theological notes, articles from scholars, information about ancient history, ancient customs, ancient temples, ancient monuments, and a close look at people, places, and events from the ancient world that are explained in an easy to understand format.

Ezekiel, 1 in the Bible Encyclopedia – ISBE

I. The Prophet and His Book. 1. The Person of Ezekiel: The name yehezqe'l, signifies "God strengthens." The Septuagint employed the form Iezekiel, from which the Vulgate (Jerome's Latin Bible, 390-405 A.D.) took its "Ezechiel" and Luther "Hesekiel." In Ezek 1:3 the prophet is said to be the son of a certain Buzi, and that he was a priest. This combination of the priestly and prophetic offices is not accidental at a time when the priests began to come more and more into the foreground. Thus, too, Jeremiah (1:1) and Zechariah (1:1; compare Ezr 5:1; 6:14; Neh 12:4,16, and my article "Zechariah" in Murray's Illustrated Bible Dictionary) were priests and prophets; and in Zec 7:3 a question in reference to fasting is put to both priests and prophets at the same time. And still more than in the case of Zechariah and Jeremiah, the priestly descent makes itself felt in the case of Ezekiel. We here already draw attention to his Levitical tendencies, which appear particularly prominent in Ezek 40 through 46 (see under II, 2 below), and to the high-priestly character of his picture of the Messiah (21:25 f; 45:22; see II, 3 below). We find Ezekiel in Tel-abib (3:15) at the river Chebar (1:1,3; 3:15) on a Euphrates canal near Nippur, where the American expedition found the archives of a great business house, "Murashu and Sons." The prophet had been taken into exile in 597 BC. This event so deeply affected the fate of the people and his personal relations that Ezekiel dates his prophecies from this event. They begin with the 5th year of this date, in which year through the appearance of the Divine glory (compare II, 1 below) he had been consecrated to the prophetic office (1:2) and continued to the 27th year (29:17), i.e. from 593 to 571 BC. The book gives us an idea of the external conditions of the exiles. The expressions "prison," "bound," which are applied to the exiles, easily create a false impression, or at any rate a one-sided idea. These terms surely to a great extent are used figuratively. Because the Jews had lost their country, their capital city, their temple, their service and their independence as a nation, their condition was under all circumstances lamentable, and could be compared with the fate of prisoners and those in fetters...

Ezekiel, 2 in the Bible Encyclopedia – ISBE

Significance of Ezekiel in Israel's Religious History. Under the first head we will consider the formal characteristics and significance of the book; and the examination of its contents will form the subject under the next four divisions. 1. Formal Characteristics of Ezekiel: It is not correct to regard Ezekiel merely as a writer, as it is becoming more and more customary to do. Passages like 3:10 f; 14:4 ff; 20:1 ff,27; 24:18 ff; 43:10 f show that just as the other prophets did, he too proclaimed by word of mouth the revelations of God he had received. However, he had access only to a portion of the people. It was indeed for him even more important than it had been for the earlier prophets to provide for the wider circulation and permanent influence of his message by putting it into written form. We will, at this point, examine his book first of all from its formal and its aesthetic side. To do this it is very difficult, in a short sketch, to give even a general impression of the practically inexhaustible riches of the means at his command for the expression of his thoughts. (1) Visions. Thus, a number of visions at once attract our attention. In the beginning of his work there appears to him the Divine throne-chariot, which comes from the north as a storm, as a great cloud and a fire rolled together. This chariot is borne by the four living creatures in the form of men, with the countenances of a man, of a lion, of an ox and of an eagle, representing the whole living creation. It will be remembered that these figures have passed over into the Revelation of John (Rev 4:7), and later were regarded as the symbols of the four evangelists. In Ezek 10 f this throne- chariot in the vision leaves the portal of the temple going toward the east, returning again in the prediction of deliverance in Ezek 43. Moreover, the entire last nine chapters are to be interpreted as a vision (compare 40:2). We must not forget, finally, the revivification of the Israelite nation in Ezek 37, represented in the picture of a field full of dead bones, which are again united, covered with skin, and receive new life through the *ruach* (word of two meanings, "wind" and "spirit")...

Archaeological light on Ezekiel

History of The Book of Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel taken captive during the time when the Babylonians began their captivity of Judah during the time of the reign of king Jehoiachin, which was about 11 years before Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. Ezekiel was one of the Jewish captives who was brought to the land of Babylon and settled on the banks of the river Chebar. While he was by this river and the "land of the Chaldeans" he had a prophetic vision and received his call to be a prophet to the people in exile. This all happened in the fourth month of the "fifth year of king

Jehoiachin's captivity" (595 BC). There is one interesting note that Ezekiel makes when he mentions that he married a woman in the land of Babylon and had a house, and that he lost his wife on the very day that the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem took place. Something else that is interesting is that the prophecies of Ezekiel address the Jews in Jerusalem and the events taking place over there, as though he was in Jerusalem, but he was actually in Babylon.

Jewish Tradition and The Book of Ezekiel

According to Jewish tradition Ezekiel was murdered in Babylon by a Jewish prince whom Ezekiel accused of idolatry, Ezekiel was supposedly buried on the banks of the Euphrates River.

Main Prophecies in The Book of Ezekiel

I. Israel's sin and impending judgment, uttered before the final captivity (Ezekiel 1-24). II. Prophecies against the nations of Am-mon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt (Ezekiel 25-32). III. Prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel, uttered after the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

Major Divisions in The Book of Ezekiel

The major divisions within the book of Ezekiel reveal the purpose of this ministry. In the first half of the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1-33) Judah is accused of breaking all of God's commandments, and they are warned by God that they will be destroyed if they persist in their sins. After Ezekiel's announcement of Jerusalem's destruction the book of Ezekiel focuses on an entirely different subject, which is one of comfort and encouragement to the heartbroken Jews.

Final Summary of the Book of Ezekiel

Ezekiel prophesied to the Jewish captives in Babylon. The Babylonians had invaded Judah three times and each time they took prisoners back to Babylon. The first invasion was in 607 BC and Daniel was taken as a captive to Babylon. The second invasion was in 597 BC and Ezekiel was taken as a captive to Babylon, and in 586 BC Jerusalem was destroyed and all the survivors were taken as captives to Babylon. Ezekiel was married to a beautiful woman who was "the desire of his eyes" and God told him but his beloved wife was going to die on the very same day that Jerusalem was to be destroyed. As a sign to the Jews a cure was commanded not to mourn his wife's death. He was to prepare himself as God had prepared himself for the death of his beloved city (Ezekiel

24:15-22). God spoke many prophecies through Ezekiel using words, parables, visions, and similitude's (strange things to point to something greater). Ezekiel also prophesied about the false shepherds in Jerusalem and God said that he will be the true Shepherd Messiah and there will be a future outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a re- gathering of Israel in the land. Ezekiel also predicted the downfall of those nations that were hostile to Judah. Ezekiel 16 is probably the most remarkable chapter concerning the love of God for his people in spite of their continuing idolatry.

Symbolism in the Book of Ezekiel

The siege of Jerusalem is portrayed in four symbolical acts (Ezekiel 4-7). In the first of these, Ezekiel evidently drew a picture of a city under siege, indicating that this was soon to be the condition of Jerusalem. After this, Ezekiel lay on his side for a great number of days, announcing that the nation was to be punished for its sins. By eating an inferior type of food which had been cooked on animal dung, Ezekiel predicted the famine which would accompany the siege. In the final act, Ezekiel shaved his head, burning his hair, striking it with a sword and scattering it to the winds, indicating the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Ezekiel 6 and 7 contain additional oracles concerning Israel's sin and imminent doom. 3) Visions of idolatry in Jerusalem and the resultant judgment and destruction of that city (Ezekiel 8-11).



The Old City of Jerusalem and the Dome from the Rock

Synthesis of the Book of Daniel

The Book of Daniel is one of the most colourful and interesting books found among the Old Testament writings. Its history covers the greater portion of Daniel's life from the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim in 605 B.C., through the ups and downs of the Neo-Babylonian era, and into the rise of Persia during the reign of Cyrus II. Daniel is thrown into the darkest pit of God's judgment against the chosen people as they become a vassal of the Babylonian Empire. Consider how Daniel must have suffered witnessing the withdrawal of God's presence from the temple in Jerusalem when it was destroyed in 587 B.C. Did you ever contemplate the magnitude of this event? As Christians we think of God's presence inside of each of us by His Holy Spirit. To the Jews of ancient Israel, God's presence was in His holy temple—the temple in Jerusalem. The same temple that God allowed the Babylonians to destroy. Is it not almost incomprehensible—the apparent triumph of evil over the true God? Yet, in the face of this terrible evil, Daniel determines all the more to remain faithful.

As literature, the Book of Daniel includes intriguing features characteristic of Hebrew writing with its love of rhythmic themes and resonating chiasms. True artistry is exhibited in its assembly, no piece accidental, every block closely fitted—*however its composition was knit*—it was done well. Yet, exactly what kind of literature is Daniel? This vexing question has proved complex and not answered satisfactorily. Pore over the commentaries if you will, but their attempts to encapsulate Daniel, to categorize it, to pigeon-hole it are but feeble shadows.

Perhaps Daniel is just a tale or collection of tales. Certainly a sense of high adventure and great storytelling propel these stories. Consider Daniel's vibrant faith, inspiring courage, clarion prayers, and audacious proclamations relentlessly evincing Yahweh as the only true King of all nations and His kingdom alone as everlasting. He is a grand hero and model for all.

As moral paradigm, Daniel is a worthy hero. Daniel finds himself a hostage of the Neo-Babylonians who have stole him and some friends away from their Judean homeland to disrupt their rulers and perhaps as a pledge to control the noisy little fiefdom known as the Yehud. (Of course, Judah itself is of no great or particular importance, but has some value as a buffer between the Babylonians and their enemies, the Egyptians.) Daniel must serve in a secular occupation not of his own choosing and somehow balance the pressures of the ever engulfing culture and the yearning of his soul to serve the living and true God whose kingdom endures forever and ever.

As prophecy, while humble Daniel resolves to live under the sovereignty of his God, that same God reveals mysteries, makes known His will, topples earthly kings, and determines all must yield to heaven. God's people are compelled to deal with the hostile people and cultures surrounding them, exercising control over them, whether in the form of the Chaldean empire or Persian bureaucracy or Greek expansionism. These foreign empires will jostle a temporal, fragile custodianship over the chosen people of the one true God. The Judean exiles will be forced to re-image their understanding of themselves and grow their knowledge of God and His promises. How can Daniel's God, whose temple lay in ruins and whose people are disbursed, reign supreme over all the earth? Can God really pluck his own from their land, disburse them among their enemies, and then restore their children to the promised land? The Ancient of Days has plans stretching far beyond the feeble expectations of the displaced Judeans.

The Book of Daniel deals with the basic issue any follower of God does: How to live godly in an imperfect and ungodly world. Fidelity to God versus the daily pressures and burdens of everyday life. Daniel deals with this issue on the

individual level and on the societal level. How do God's people maintain their corporate identity and faithful to God?

Do not our difficulties pale in comparison! What can Daniel teach us? What is God's role in our lives...? Is our nation all powerful...really?

Title

The Book of Daniel is named after its central character and author. This pattern is not unique to the Book of Daniel since the biblical books Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were named for the same reason. The Hebrew title of the book is *Daniye'l* or *Dani'el*, which means, "God is my judge," "God is judging," or "God will judge." The Greek title as used in the LXX is the basis for both the Latin and English titles.

Date

The internal chronological markers found within the book leave little ambiguity concerning when it was written. The book opens in 605 B.C. (1:1) and concludes in 536 B.C. (10:1). Given the importance of the message of the book for benefit of the deportees, it is likely that the book was composed not later than 530 B.C. However, "J. D. Michaelis revived Porphyry's theory in 1771, and it took root in the rationalist intellectual soil of Enlightenment. Since then many scholars who disbelieve in predictive prophecy have insisted that this book must have been the product of the Maccabean revolt (168-165 B.C.). Liberal critics still consider the dating of Daniel to be one of most assured results of modern scholarship." However, the arguments used to date the book late are answerable.

First, late date advocates believe that because the book is included in the *Kethubiim* section of the Jewish canon rather than the *Naviim*, it must have been written in the post exilic period after the era of the prophets transpired. However, there are logical reasons concerning why the book should appear in the writings section of the Jewish canon that have nothing to do with a late date. For example, while the other prophets focus on oracles, Daniel emphasizes predictions and narrative material. Moreover, unlike the other Old Testament prophets, Daniel does not contain proclamations to God's people, does not emphasize calls to repentance, and does not call attention to his ordination as a prophet. Rather than functioning in the typical role as a prophet, Daniel seems to function as a statesman or a government official. Moreover, inclusion in the *Kethubiim* really has nothing to do with regency since other early works also

appear in this section of Scripture. Among them are Job, Ruth, the Davidic Psalms, and the Solomonic writings.

Second, late date advocates contend that the book must have been written long after the time of Daniel since the work abounds in historical inaccuracies that a writer would not have made had he written at the time of the book's events. However, most of these alleged historical inaccuracies have been resolved. For example, while Daniel 1:1 indicates that Nebuchadnezzar's siege took place in the third year of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah 25:1 and 46:2 indicate that it took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. However, this apparent contradiction can be explained in terms of Daniel following "the Babylonian practice of considering the first year of a king's reign as the accession year and the next year as his first official year."

Furthermore, while the Book of Daniel repeatedly calls Belshazzar a king, ancient king lists reveal Nabonidus to be Nebuchadnezzar's successor without mentioning Belshazzar. However, the 1854 discovery of the Nabonidus Chronicle revealed not only that Belshazzar was the oldest son of Nabonidus, but it also demonstrated that Nabonidus and Belshazzar were involved in a co-regency form of rulership (5:16, 29). Such a discovery buttresses the early date position. "The record of Belshazzar's coregency had been lost by the time of Herodotus (around 450 B.C.) and was not discovered until recently. Thus Daniel must have been composed *before* 450 B.C., while knowledge of this fact was still available." Moreover, some have objected that Daniel mistakenly referred to Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's son as indicated in Daniel 5:2, 11, 13, 18, and 22. Yet, Pentecost notes that, "it has been demonstrated that the royal successor to the throne was called a 'son' (5:22) even if he had no blood relationship to an earlier king."

In addition, the Book of Daniel mentions Darius the Mede (5:31; 6:1; 9:1) despite the fact that evidence of such a person has never been discovered in extra-biblical sources and the extra-biblical material indicates that Cyrus was the successor of Nabonidus and Belshazzar. However, some believe that the writer purposely confused Darius Hystaspes with Cyrus the Great. However, this solution is unlikely since a reader could easily check the chronology of these kings (Ezra 4:5-7). Others equate Darius the Mede with Cyrus. This solution forces Daniel 6:28 to take on the following appositional translation. "So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, namely the reign of Cyrus the Persian." However, while Daniel 9:1 indicates that Darius was the son of Ahasuerus, extra-biblical sources indicate that Cyrus was the son of Cambyses. It seems best to equate Darius with the Babylonian governor Gubaru. Apparently, Gubaru received the royal title Darius when Cyrus appointed him.

Third, late date proponents contend that the Jewish intertestamental material does not cite the Book of Daniel until 180 B.C. Harrison's rebuttal to the contention is sufficient.

The shallowness and erroneous nature of such a position had been amply demonstrated by the Qumran discoveries, which make it impossible to deny the popularity of Daniel at that period, if the numbers of copies and fragments of the composition may be taken as furnishing any indication at all of the situation.

A proper assessment of the evidence provided by Ecclesiasticus should include recognition of the possibility that Ben Sira deliberately excluded Daniel from his list of notables for unknown reasons, as he did also with Job and all the Judges except Samuel, as well as Kings Asa and Jehoshaphat, Mordecai, and even Ezra himself. Ecclesiasticus is clearly limited in its usefulness as a ground of appeal for establishing the historicity of certain well-known Hebrew personages, if, indeed, it should ever be employed at all in this manner. It can be remarked, however, that there are allusions to Daniel and his book in Maccabees (1 Macc. 2:59ff.) Baruch (-), and the *Sibylline Oracles* (III, 397ff.), all of which are at least second-century B.C. compositions, and these works attest to the familiarity of the Daniel tradition at that time.

Fourth, late date proponents claim that there is no clear statement in Daniel indicating Danielic authorship of the book. However, Daniel 2- 7 repeatedly makes reference to "Daniel." The fact that Daniel 1- 6 refers to Daniel in the third person in no way disqualifies him from authoring that section of the book since writers often referred to themselves in the third person in the ancient Near East. Not only does the Code of Hammurabi follow this practice but so does the Decalogue itself (Exod 20:2, 7).

Fifth, late date advocates maintain that the book must have been written in the second century rather than the sixth century since an early date would amount to the writer knowing history in advance. This line of thinking views the prophecies in the book as *vaticinium ex eventu* material. In other words, they represent prophecies after the fact or history disguised as prophecy for the purpose of strengthening the Jewish remnant during the Maccabean revolt. While this practice can be found in twelfth century Akkadian material as well as Jewish Apocalyptic literature written in between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D., it is doubtful that the Book of Daniel follows this practice. Attributing such a practice to the Book of Daniel would devalue inspired material to the level of other fraudulent works. Also, this view emanates from nothing more than an anti-supernatural bias against predictive prophecy (2:28; 10:14).

Sixth, the existence of Greek loan words in Daniel causes late date advocates to maintain that the book was written after Alexander the Great spread the Greek language throughout the known world in A.D. 330. However, these words are musical instruments (3:5), which are notorious for crossing international boundaries. Also, it is not surprising that Greek loan words would show up in Daniel since Greeks were enslaved in both Babylon and Persia as early as the seventh century. Interestingly, these Greek words were obsolete thus causing the LXX translators to give them an inaccurate translation. At any rate, if Daniel were written after A.D. 330, one would expect to find far more Greek words in the book than the scant amount that actually appear.

Seventh, late date advocates hold that the Aramaic in Daniel is late. However, a comparison of Daniel's Aramaic with later Aramaic found in the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as Aramaic found in earlier sources indicates that Daniel was written early rather than late. *Eighth*, some late date advocates seek to build their case upon Persian words found in the book. However, this argument represents no argument since Daniel lived and wrote during the Persian era under Cyrus .

The arguments used to date Daniel late are outweighed by early date arguments.

First, because the sixth century prophet Ezekiel mentions Daniel (Ezek 14:14, 20; 28:3), Daniel must have been one of his contemporaries. Attempts to associate Ezekiel's mention of Daniel with a pagan deity are to no avail since Ezekiel emphasizes Daniel's virtuous and exemplary life. It is doubtful that Ezekiel would have connected these notions with a pagan deity.

Second, Daniel evidences a sixth century understanding of history when he locates Shushan in the province of Elam during the time of the Babylonian empire (8:2). Such historical specificity is significant since "from the Greek and Roman historians we learn that in the Persian period Shushan, or Susa, was assigned to a new province which was named after it, Susiana, and the formerly more extensive province of Elam was restricted to the territory west of the Eulaeus River [cf. Strabo, 15:3, 12; 16:1, 17; Pliny, Natural History, 6. 27]." Thus, Pentecost correctly observes, "Daniel's familiarity with the individuals spoken of in the book and with the historical events and customs mentioned in the book necessitates a sixth-century date for the book."

Third, the late date is untenable since "The four-year time span (168-164) is far too short for a book of that time to be written, copied, circulated, and adopted as truth and then preserved as canon despite the apparent failure of its predictions."

Fourth, the late date still cannot avoid the implications of futuristic prophecy

since Daniel contains prophecies of Rome's rise to power and Rome came into existence after the Maccabean era. Attempts to enumerate the four beasts of Daniel 7 as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece in order to escape the implications of a futuristic Rome are to no avail since Media and Persia are presented in the book as a single empire (5:28).

Authorship

The view that one takes regarding authorship of the book is related to his view concerning when the book was written. If the late date is adhered to, then Daniel could not have been the author since the book was composed long after his era. Rather, a Maccabean pseudepigraph, or someone using the pseudonym Daniel in order to attach credibility to his work, wrote the book. Thus, viewing Daniel as the actual author is only tenable if one holds to an early date for the book's composition. However, because of the legitimacy of the arguments for the early date of the book as discussed above, viewing Daniel as the book's author is feasible.

Although Nebuchadnezzar may have written some of the book (Dan 4), Daniel's constant use of the first person shows him to be a likely candidate for the book's author (7:2; 8:1; 9:2; 10:2; 12:5). In fact, Daniel 12:4 seems to imply that Daniel was the book's author. The fact that Daniel 1-6 refers to Daniel in the third person in no way disqualifies him from authoring that section of the book since writers often referred to themselves in the third person in the ancient Near East. Not only does the Code of Hammurabi follow this practice but so does the Decalogue itself (Exod 20:2, 7).

Christ also attributed authorship of the book to Daniel (Matt 24:15). Contending that Christ was simply accommodating the first century consensus that the book was written by a Maccabean pseudepigraph is unlikely given Christ's pattern of going against the status quo by correcting inaccurate yet popular interpretations (Matt 5:33-34, 38-39; 15:11-20; 19:9; John 8:24, 44). Jewish tradition (*Baba Bathra* 15b) also attributes authorship of the book to Daniel. Although some have challenged the unity of the book, this contention seems unlikely since the dominant themes of God's covenant, sovereignty, eternal kingdom (2:44; 4:3, 34; 6:26; 7:14, 8, 27), and status as the most high (3:26; 4:2, 17, 24-25, 32, 34; 5:18, 21; 7:18, 22, 25, 27) are reiterated throughout the book's major sections.

Audience(s)

It seems that Daniel addressed two audiences. A mixed audience is apparent due to the fact that the book was written in two different languages. The Hebrew

sections of the book (1, 8- 12) indicate that it was addressed to the Jewish captives in order to encourage them by reminding them of God’s sovereignty during the “times of the Gentiles.” The Aramaic sections of the book (2- 7) indicate that it was also addressed to the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians, which were the two Gentile empires of Daniel’s time. Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of these empires as well as the language of diplomacy since the eighth century. This section of the book was designed to communicate to these Gentiles that God was sovereign over them in spite of the fact that they held Israel in temporary subjugation.

Scope

The first recorded date in the book () is 605 B.C. and the last recorded date of the book is the third year of Cyrus (), which took place in 536 B.C. Thus, the scope of the book involves the 69-year time period between these two dates. Therefore, the book covers two separate Gentile kingdoms and four separate Gentile administrations. The two Gentile kingdoms are the Babylonian and Media-Persian Empires. The four separate administrations are the Babylonian administrations of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and the Media-Persian administrations of Darius and Cyrus. The specific dates that took place during the scope of the book are summarized on the following chart.

Chapter and verse in Daniel	Chronological date	Biblical date
1:1	605	3 rd year of Jehoiakim
2:1	603	2 nd year of Nebuchadnezzar
5	Sat. night 10/12/539 (Hoehner)	
7:1	553	1 st year of Belshazzar
8:1	551	3 rd year of Belshazzar
9:1	538	1 st year of Darius
10:1	536	3 rd year of Cyrus

Historical Background

There are five pieces of historical information that the reader must grasp in order to fully appreciate the message of the Book of Daniel. *First*, it is necessary to understand Israel’s covenant structure. The unconditional land, seed, and blessing promises as given in the Abrahamic Covenant are later amplified in the land, Davidic, and New Covenants. However, the conditional Mosaic Covenant

spells out the blessings (Deut 28:1-14) or curses (Deut 28:15-68) that any Jewish generation will experience based upon their compliance or lack of compliance with the terms of the Mosaic Covenant. While disobedience will invoke the curses of the Mosaic Covenant upon any generation, disobedience cannot cancel God's covenant program for the next generation or for the nation as a whole due to the unconditional promises found in the Abrahamic Covenant. This covenant structure explains why the book opens with Israel in captivity (Deut 28:49) and why God, throughout the book, promises to preserve the nation.

Second, Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Babylon took place in three stages with Daniel's captivity representing the first of these three stages. Nebuchadnezzar probably took Daniel and the princes first in order to indoctrinate the best and the brightest Jewish exiles so that they in turn could influence the rest of the nation to adopt the Babylonian way of life.

Third, the Book of Daniel inaugurates the "times of the Gentiles." This era represents the period of time between the inauguration of the Jewish captivity and the Second Advent when Israel has no reigning Davidic king (Dan 2; 7; Luke 21:24; Rev 11:2).

Fourth, Daniel's contemporaries were Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah prophesied about the coming exile. Ezekiel, who was taken in the second deportation, ministered to those who were taken along with him near the Chebar River outside of Babylon. *Fifth*, Daniel had a keen interest in the destiny of Israel since he was both of royal (1:3) lineage and noble birth (1:6).

Genre

The Book of Daniel employs two primary literary genres. Some of the book is composed in straightforward narrative (1; 3- 6). However, other sections of the book are composed in biblical apocalyptic (2; 7; 8- 12). Pentecost offers the following characteristics of biblical apocalyptic material.

Apocalyptic literature in the Bible has several characteristics: (1) In apocalyptic literature a person who received God's truths in visions recorded what he saw. (2) Apocalyptic literature makes extensive use of symbols or signs. (3) Such literature normally gives revelation concerning God's program for the future of His people Israel. (4) Prose was usually employed in apocalyptic literature, rather than poetic style which was normal in most prophetic literature.

In addition to Daniel and Revelation, apocalyptic literature is found in Ezekiel 37- 48 and Zechariah 1:7- 7:8. In interpreting visions, symbols, and signs in apo-

calyptic literature, one is seldom left to his own ingenuity to discover the truth. In most instances an examination of the context or comparison with the parallel biblical passages provides the Scriptures' own interpretation of the visions or the symbols employed. Apocalyptic literature then demands a careful comparison of Scripture with Scripture to arrive at a correct understanding of the revelation being given.

Theology in Daniel

Several theological themes recur throughout the book of Daniel. *First*, the book communicates God's sovereignty over the Gentile empires during the "times of the Gentiles" (2:21; 4:35; 5:21). Thus, God is more powerful than the Gentile kingdoms subjugating Israel and these kingdoms are accountable to Him. *Second*, the book emphasizes consecrated living. *Third*, the book explains both the outworking of the Mosaic and Abrahamic Covenants. The nation will be forced to endure further curses pronounced in the Mosaic Covenant as a consequence of continual disobedience. However, in the end, God will preserve a Jewish remnant and establish the kingdom through Israel in honor of what has been promised to the nation in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Unique Characteristics

The Book of Daniel boasts several outstanding characteristics. *First*, the book heavily involves dreams and visions since nine out of its twelve chapters involve a dream/vision and its interpretation. *Second*, Daniel represents one of the few select Bible characters about whom nothing negative is said. *Third*, Daniel, along with the Book of Ezra, is the only biblical book to be composed in two different languages. *Fourth*, Daniel is the only biblical book that explains how God fulfilled His covenant program during the so call "four hundred years of silence" in the intertestamental period. *Fifth*, Daniel is foundational toward understanding subsequent eschatological aspects of Scripture. The Book of Revelation builds upon an eschatological foundation previously erected by Daniel.

Christ in Daniel

Christ is apparent in Daniel in several ways. *First*, Christ is represented in the smiting stone that is cut without human hands that destroys the preceding Gentile powers (2:34-35, 49). In other words, Christ will return and establish the kingdom through Israel at the end of the "times of the Gentles." *Second*, the reference to the Son of Man figure (7:13-14) is an obvious reference to Christ (Mark 14:61-62). *Third*, Christ is also evident in Daniel's prediction of His

messianic entrance exactly 483 years after Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem (Dan 9:25-26; Luke 19:42). *Fourth*, Christ may also be evident in the appearance of the angelic visitor (10:5-9) since he is described similarly to how Christ is later depicted by John (Rev 1:12-16).

Structure

Several structural clues make it easier for readers to digest the contents of Daniel. *First*, both major sections of the book involving piety (1- 7) and prophecy (8- 12) contribute to the major theme of encouraging the exiles by demonstrating God's sovereignty. Thus, these sections should not be bifurcated but rather viewed as a cohesive whole. *Second*, because the book does not necessarily proceed in chronological order, the following chart helps the reader keep track of what empire and king is in power in any given chapter in the Book of Daniel.

Chapter(s) in Daniel	Empire	King
1- 4	Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar
5	Babylon	Belshazzar
6	Media-Persia	Darius
7-8	Babylon	Belshazzar
9	Media-Persia	Darius
10-11	Media-Persia	Cyrus

Third, Daniel was a different age in different chapters in the book. The following chart helps the reader keep track of Daniel's age from one chapter to the next.

Fourth, noting the book's two major divisions is helpful. The first section is mostly written in Aramaic while the second section is written in Hebrew. Furthermore, the first section can be chiastically arranged.

I. Historic (1-7)

A. Intro "Hebrew" (1)

B. Chiasm "Aramaic" (2-7)

- 1. Gentile History (2)
- 2. Protection (3)
- 3. Revelation to a gentile king (4)
- 3. Revelation to a gentile king (5)
- 2. Protection (6)
- 1. Gentile history (7)

II. Prophetic (8-12)

A. Ram and Goat (8)

B. 70 weeks (9)

C. Final vision (10-12)

In the first section, Daniel interprets most of the visions and speaks of himself in the third person. This section is mostly addressed to the Gentile nations subjugating Israel during the times of the Gentiles. In the second major section, an angel interprets the visions and Daniel speaks of himself in the first person. This section exclusively addresses the future of national Israel and therefore is addressed only to that nation. *Fifth*, an interrelationship exists between the visions of chapters , 7, and 8. This interrelationship is captured on the following chart.

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8	Kingdoms represented	Years in power
Head of gold	Lion with eagle's wings		Babylon	605-539 B.C.
Chest and arms of silver	Bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth	Ram with two horns	Media-Persia	538-331 B.C
Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with four wings and four heads	Male goat with one great horn, four horns, and one little horn	Greece	331-146 B.C
Legs of iron and feet of iron and clay	Incomparable beast with ten horns and a little horn		Rome	146 B.C. to A.D. 476
Stone that becomes a great mountain	Messiah and saints receive the kingdom		Kingdom of God	

Message

Daniel encourages the exiles during the “times of the Gentiles” by reminding them of God’s sovereignty over the Gentile empires that are oppressing them, by reminding them of God’s covenant faithfulness through His intention of persevering the nation, and by reminding them of God’s intention to ultimately restore the kingdom to Israel. Just as the Mosaic Law taught the nation how they

are to live inside the land, Daniel instructs the exiles regarding how they are to live outside the land by exhorting them to consecrate themselves to God. Thus, the deportees are to leave the results of their lives and their circumstances in God's hands. They are to trust in Him and His sovereignty as they live from crisis to crisis.

Purposes

Daniel seems to have had several purposes in mind when he wrote his book. *First*, Daniel wrote in order to provide a historical record of the exiles that lived during the captivity. *Second*, he wrote to give Godly examples for the purpose of showing the exiles how they are to live now that they had been exported from the land. *Third*, he wrote to explain how God remained sovereign over the Gentile nations that had taken the nation captive.

Fourth, Daniel wrote to explain that God would honor the Abrahamic Covenant by protecting the nation even as Israel sojourned in Gentile territory during a time of national discipline. *Fifth*, Daniel wrote in order to provide an outline of the "times of the Gentiles" (Dan2;7). This era represents the period of time in between the captivity and the Second Advent. During this time Israel will have no reigning Davidic king, will be under divine discipline, and will be trampled upon by Gentile powers (Luke 21:24; Rev 11:2).

Sixth, Daniel wrote in order to provide an outline of God's prophetic program for Israel spanning from the time of the captivity and to the establishment of the kingdom when the nation's covenants will be fulfilled (Dan 8-12). Specifically, Daniel wrote in order to explain the circumstances by which the wayward nation would continue to undergo discipline throughout the times of the Gentiles and yet repent during the tribulation period thereby ushering in the realization of her covenant promises and the establishment of the kingdom. *Seventh*, Daniel wrote to encourage the exiles by reminding them of God's covenant faithfulness and sovereignty over their adverse circumstances.

An Outline for the Book of Daniel

We always seek an outline in any book that we study. Many outlines may be made by many people, but the simplest outline is always found with the book itself, either in one verse as we found it in Revelation, chapter 1, verse 19, or in the spiritually directed construction of the book itself. The latter is the case with the book of Daniel.

The first six chapters of the book of Daniel deal with Daniel's interpretation of the visions which other people had. Other people had the visions, and they called on Daniel to tell them what the visions meant. This would naturally involve quite a personal history of Daniel, and it does to such an extent that many Bible scholars, when they describe the book of Daniel, tell us that the first six chapters of the book deal with the personal history of the man. That should be considered in our thinking.

In the last half of the book, chapters 7 through 12, Daniel deals not with the visions which other people had, but with the visions which he himself had. If you will keep these two facts in mind, you will be able to understand the book of Daniel as we discuss it. The first six chapters deal with visions which other people had, with Daniel as the interpreter, and the last six chapters deal with visions which Daniel had, the Lord giving to Daniel, personally, the interpretation of his own visions.

Another very interesting fact in relation to rightly dividing the book is the language in which the book is written. Half of the book is written in Aramaic and the other half is written in Hebrew. The half written in Aramaic deals with the Gentiles. The half written in Hebrew deals with the Jews and that seems to me to be significant; the Holy Spirit has planted an outline of the book within the book itself.

The division of languages is not quite in line with the division of subject matter as I mentioned to you a moment ago, but it is just as clear. The first chapter of the book is written in Hebrew because it deals with the Hebrews.

Then chapters 2 through 7 are written in Aramaic. The remaining portion is written in Hebrew, so that it balances out—six chapters in Aramaic and six chapters in Hebrew.

This is God's plan for this particular book, and it should be of real interest to us.

Characteristics of the Man Daniel

I want to say a word to you about the man, Daniel. If we are going to understand the book, we need to understand a little about the man himself. Therefore, I would like to suggest to you that this man, Daniel, had four characteristics.

Pleasing to God

He was an individual who pleased the Lord, or he was an individual, we could say, of a pure light. Notice in chapter 6, verse 5, a simple statement related to

this particular thing. In chapter 6 we have the story of how some people who were jealous of Daniel tried to find something whereof they could accuse him before the king. We are told that they looked and looked and looked to find something with which they could accuse him:

Daniel 6:

5 *Then said these men, we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*

My, isn't that a tremendous testimony? Do you suppose that if somebody were to examine your life to find some fault in it, that is all they could say? Could they say, "You know, we looked at that fellow very carefully, and we can't find a thing in the world wrong with him except in relation to his religion. That fellow is a religious fanatic." That is the only thing they could say about him. That is indeed a testimony to covet.

Turn with me, please, to chapter 14 of the book of Ezekiel as we notice another illustration of the fact that Daniel was a man whose life was pure. Daniel was a man who pleased the Lord.

God is pronouncing judgment upon the city of Jerusalem, and He makes a statement in verse 14 which He repeats in verse 20. These statements emphasize to us the place that Daniel had in the sight of God:

Ezekiel 14:

14 *Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.*

Ezekiel 14:

12 *Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.*

Of course, you understand the implication of these verses. When Noah was living, God looked down upon the earth and the whole earth was wicked in His sight. There wasn't one who was doing what he ought to do, with the exception of Noah and his family. Noah was the only righteous man in his generation.

When the Devil was looking for somebody to poke his finger at, to criticize the work of God in the life of an individual, God said, “Why don't you try my servant Job?” God had so much confidence in Job that He was willing for the Devil to pick him apart.

Daniel is placed in the same group—Noah, Job, and Daniel. Of course, you remember the incident in relation to the city of Sodom. When Abraham was praying that the city of Sodom might be spared, he made a little agreement with God. He said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city, will You spare the city?” You know the story. It came down until even Abraham got discouraged in praying about it.

“With that same thought in mind,” God said to the city of Jerusalem, “if three righteous men such as Noah, Daniel, and Job were in the city of Jerusalem, I still couldn't spare it from judgment.” The only thing that would happen is that those three men, because they are righteous men, would be spared destruction.

This gives us an idea of the kind of man that Daniel was. He was pure in the sight of God.

A Man of Purpose

Go back to the book of Daniel and notice what is perhaps the most familiar statement about Daniel. We must not neglect it as we think together about the kind of man that Daniel was. In Daniel, chapter 1, verse 8, we read:

Daniel 1:

8 *But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

Daniel was a man of purpose. I don't think we will understand this purpose unless we realize that Daniel wasn't worried about calories when he made this statement. He was willing to trust God in relation to his health. The problem was that this meat and this drink had already been offered to idols. They were a part of idol worship, and he refused, absolutely refused, to have anything to do with anything that was related to idol worship. He purposed in his heart not to have anything to do with it even if it meant his life.

May I remind you that Daniel was not a man of spasmodic purpose. That is the reason one trusts him in these revelations. You will remember that in chapter 6,

verse 10, it is recorded that he was still a man of purpose. He could have swerved; he could have changed. But not Daniel! We read:

Daniel 6:

10 *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

The key to this verse is the last phrase, “as he did aforetime.” He opened his window toward Jerusalem because God's Word instructed him to do that. Read II Samuel, chapter 7, when you have time. David prayed three times a day because God's Word told him to do it. When he had to choose between keeping his vows concerning prayer and die as a result, or breaking his vows to God and having life as a reward, he kept his vows to God. He was a man of purpose.

A Man of Prayer

We have already touched upon this thing that I want you to notice, but we mention it so that you may have a complete picture of Daniel. We suggest to you that Daniel was not only a man of purity and not only a man of purpose, but Daniel was a man of prayer.

Many lessons related to prayer are found in the book of Daniel. Read carefully, when you have time, chapter 9, a portion of which we mentioned just a moment ago. Time will not permit us to read it in its entirety. There you will be introduced to one of the most unusual prayers recorded in the Word of God. It is a true illustration of intercession.

A Man of Prophecy

Then we would like to remind you that Daniel was a man of prophecy. It was the Lord Jesus Christ who called him “Daniel the Prophet.” It was his job to prophesy these events which we will be considering.

If you are going to believe what is recorded here in the book of Daniel, it is important for you to remember that Daniel was not only a man who prophesied: he was the subject of prophecy himself. The book of Daniel begins with a fulfilled prophecy. I call your attention to that in order that you may start off with faith that the prophecies in the book of Daniel are going to be fulfilled. If some prophecies are fulfilled, that should be a guarantee that all will be.

Beginning of Captivity of Judah

So will you notice chapter 1, verse 1:

Daniel 1:

- 1 *In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.*
- 2 *And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his God; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his God.*

Here is a simple statement of how Daniel and the children of Israel got into the land of Babylon. If you will look at verse 1, you will think it is due to the fact that Nebuchadnezzar, with all of his Babylonians, with all of his skill, with all of his power, would have been absolutely helpless had the Lord not given Jehoiakin, king of Judah, into his hands. Along with Jehoiakim, the Lord gave the vessels of gold and the vessels of silver, etc. I say this is a fulfillment of prophecy.

Turn with me, please, to II Kings, chapter 20. Here is the story of a sad incident in the life of Hezekiah. You will remember that God had said to Hezekiah, "I want to take you home. Set your house in order." Hezekiah was not any more anxious to go to Heaven than a lot of Christians are today, and so immediately he began to plead with God and say, "Give me an extension of time. Don't make me go right away," If you read the chapter carefully, you will find that Hezekiah wasn't saying, "If it is Your will, let me live." He was begging God to let him live. He was saying in so many words, "I want to live whether You want me to or not," and God let him have his way!

Remember, if you fuss at God long enough, He will let you have your way, but it won't always be best for you. It was not best for Hezekiah, because he lived just long enough to bring about the captivity of the children of Israel in the land of Babylon.

Prophecy Concerning Judah's Captivity

If you will notice now in II Kings, chapter 20, a group of people came from Babylon to visit Hezekiah. We read from verse 12:

II Kings 20:

- 12 *At that time Berodach-bele-dan, the son of Baladan king Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.*
- 13 *And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasure: There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.*
- 14 *Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, they are come from a far country, even from Babylon.*
- 15 *And he said What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, all the things that are in mine house have they seen: There is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.*
- 16 *And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.*
- 17 *Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: Nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.*
- 18 *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.*

When Nebuchadnezzar made war on Jehoiakim and God delivered Jehoiakim into his hands, this prophecy was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar took all of the treasures just as Isaiah had said he would, and not only did he take all of the treasures, but he took the descendants of Hezekiah (Daniel was one of them.) and made them eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. The book of Daniel begins with a fulfilled prophecy.

Now wait just a minute! God waited approximately one hundred years to fulfill the prophecy that He gave to Hezekiah through Isaiah, but He fulfilled it. He waited a hundred years to do it, but He did it. Some of the prophecies that are contained in the book of Daniel were fulfilled two hundred years after Daniel

gave them. Some of them have not yet been fulfilled; we will see the fulfillment of them. But God's Word is pure. You can depend on that.

Argument

The material given in the first chapter is largely introductory. It sets the stage for themes that will be more fully developed throughout the rest of the book. For example, the theme of God comforting the exiles by demonstrating His sovereignty over the Gentile empires that have subjugated Israel will make little sense unless the reader first grasps how God's sovereignty was challenged by Babylon. Thus, the first chapter explains that Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel and his friends captive into the land of Shinar (1:1-2). The name Shinar (1:2) is significant since it represents the location of the first (Gen 11:2) and last (Zech 5:11; Rev 17- 18) universal rebellions by mankind against God. Daniel also connects Shinar with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon in order to show that this same spirit of rebellion was alive and well in Daniel's day in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel also notes that Nebuchadnezzar even went so far in challenging God's sovereignty that he took the sacred vessels out of the temple.

Nebuchadnezzar also challenged God's sovereignty by taking the best and the brightest of the exiles for the purpose of indoctrinating them in the Babylonian ways for an extended period of time. His goal was to release them back to their own people so they in turn could influence the rest of the nation to come under the Babylonian system (1:3-7). Nebuchadnezzar's challenge to God's authority is seen in the way he took the Godly names of the four Hebrew youths and renamed them so that their new names reflected Babylonian concepts (1:6-7). Just as Adam's right to name the animals (Gen 2:19) showed his divinely given authority over earth and the animal kingdom (Gen 1:26-28), Nebuchadnezzar's renaming of the four Hebrew youths demonstrated the authority that he claimed over their lives.

The resolution of Daniel not to eat the king's vegetables (Exod 34:15) is included to show the exiles how they are to live now that they are outside the land (1:8-16). They are to consecrate themselves to God and trust in Him to handle the rest of the issues in their lives. The favor upon Daniel and his friends for exhibiting covenant loyalty shows the exiles the divine favor that will also rest upon them as they consecrate themselves to God during their Babylonian sojourn (1:9, 15). The threat to the commander's life (1:10) for even questioning Nebuchadnezzar's regimen reveals the threat of elimination that Daniel and the nation faced for rejecting the king's food. However, the divine blessing upon Daniel and his friends shows God's intention to honor His covenant by preserving a remnant during the exile.

The chapter concludes with the divine blessing upon the four Jewish youths (1:17-21). Three blessings are in view. First, they were granted knowledge. Second, they were found acceptable in the sight of Nebuchadnezzar when he tested them. Third, Daniel was granted longevity of service in the Babylonian and Media Persian Empire. These blessings are included to show the exiles how they are to live for God during the deportation. They demonstrate that God will take care of the issues in their lives as they consecrate themselves to Him. These blessings also reveal God's intention of preserving a remnant during the captivity.

The Aramaic chiastic section of the book (2- 7) begins with Nebuchadnezzar's dream in 603 B.C. (2:1). Daniel's ability to provide both the revelation as well as the interpretation of the dream stands in contrast to the Babylonian magicians' inability to provide neither of these (2:2-13). Thus, the writer includes this material to show the sovereignty of God over the Babylonian system. While the Chaldeans were ineffective in providing a revelation and interpretation, the divinely gifted prophet Daniel could provide both through his dependence upon God (2:14-30). This section involving Daniel's request for more time as well as his dependence upon God in the midst of a crisis situation is also included to exemplify to the exiles how they too are to live by trusting in God's sovereignty as they move from one crisis situation to the next.

The dream (2:31-35) and its interpretation (2:36-45) are important since they reveal God's program for Israel during the "times of the Gentiles." Four items about this time period would greatly encourage the exiles. First, they would be encouraged to know that this time period would not last forever but rather would be limited to four specific empires. Second, they would be encouraged to know that God was sovereign over the empires that were oppressing them. His limitation of their reigns revealed His sovereignty over them. Third, they would be encouraged to know of God's covenant faithfulness as evidenced by His intention to preserve a remnant throughout this traumatic time period. Fourth, they would be encouraged to know of God's purpose to honor the Abrahamic covenant by learning of His intention to ultimately restore the kingdom to Israel (2:35, 44).

The chapter concludes with Nebuchadnezzar paying homage to both Daniel and God () and promoting not only Daniel but also his three friends (). This material is included since it reinforces the theme of God's intention to preserve a remnant through dangerous times. It also reinforces the theme of how God will handle the issues in the lives of His people as they consecrate themselves to Him

throughout the times of the gentiles. Thus, this concluding material further exemplifies how the Jews in the exile are to live.

The second level in the chiasm involves the story of the three Hebrew friends thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's furnace (3). This story again reiterates the theme of God's sovereignty over the Gentile empires since He supernaturally thwarted the attempt of Nebuchadnezzar to kill the three Hebrews (). It also would encourage the exiles by again showing God's intent of honoring the covenant by supernaturally protecting the nation. Just as God protected the three Hebrews, He would similarly protect the nation throughout the times of the Gentiles.

The story also is included to use the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to exemplify to the rest of the exiles how they are to live throughout the times of the Gentiles. They are to consecrate themselves to God and allow Him to take care of the other issues in their lives just as the three Hebrews had modeled. The willingness of the three Hebrews to completely trust in God's sovereignty in a crisis situation is evidenced by their acknowledgment that whether they would be saved from the fire was entirely God's prerogative (3:16-18). Their subsequent promotion after the completion of this test demonstrates to the rest of the exiles how God will similarly handle the issues in their lives when their priority is consecrated living (3:28-30).

The third level of the chiasm involves the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dethronement and re-enthronement (4). This story clearly teaches God's sovereignty over the pagan kings during the times of the Gentiles since the purpose of Nebuchadnezzar's trial was to teach him to acknowledge the reality of Yahweh's sovereignty (4:17, 25, 26, 30, 31, 35). A record of these events would provide a source of comfort to the exiles by revealing God's sovereignty over the very king that was oppressing them. Thus, the very first oppressive king during the times of the Gentiles was subservient to God. God's sovereignty over the Babylonian system is also seen in how only God's prophet Daniel could interpret the vision while the rest of the Babylonian magicians could not (4:9, 18).

This story also serves as an example regarding how the exiles are to live. Daniel risked his own life in relaying the prophecy to Nebuchadnezzar even though it was unfavorable to the king. Thus, Daniel consecrated himself to God even at personal risk. He trusted completely in God to take care of him. The exiles should do the same in their times of crisis. God's willingness to preserve Daniel would serve as a comfort to the exiles by showing His intention of preserving a remnant throughout this difficult time period. Just as God preserved Daniel, God would similarly preserve the nation. This theme of national preservation and

restoration is also buttressed through the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar to his position of authority after he acknowledged God's sovereignty (Dan 4). Daniel's readers would conclude that if God can restore a rebellious pagan king, then He would also one day certainly restore His covenanted nation.

The events of chapter 5 line up chiastically with events of chapter 4. However, the contents of chapter 5 differ from those of chapter 4 by showing that God is sovereignly capable of permanently removing an entire empire (5:1-5) just as He is capable of temporarily removing and then restoring a king (4:1-3). Because Belshazzar failed to learn the lesson regarding God's sovereign authority that his predecessor Nebuchadnezzar had learned (5:21), God would hand the Babylonian kingdom over to the Medes and the Persians. A record of these events would encourage the exiles by reminding them that all of the oppressive forces that the nation would experience during the times of the Gentiles would only be allowed to assert themselves for a limited duration. Each oppressive empire would only be allowed to stay in power for a specific amount of time.

The queen's recommendation of Daniel to interpret the writing instead of the Babylonian magicians again reveals God's sovereignty over the Babylonian pantheon since only Yahweh can reveal mysteries. Also, Belshazzar's promotion of Daniel in spite of Daniel's earlier rebuke of the king again exemplifies to the deportees how they are to live in the exile by consecrating themselves to God and trusting in Him to handle the remaining issues in their lives. God's promotion of Daniel also shows how God supernaturally protected him from the king's wrath even after he earlier rebuked the king. This series of events would comfort the exiles by reminding them of God's intention to similarly preserve them even in the midst of hostile pagan powers throughout the times of the Gentiles.

The events of chapter 6 line up chiastically with events of chapter 3. Just as God supernaturally acted to protect the three Hebrew friends in the midst of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, God once again acted to supernaturally protect Daniel in the lion's den. These stories when taken together would serve as a great source of encouragement to the exiles in the midst of the times of the gentiles. They communicate God's faithfulness to His covenant through the preservation of a remnant is still applicable under the Medo-Persian government just as it was in effect during the preceding Babylonian government.

The story of Daniel and the lion's den also taught Darius a lesson about God's sovereignty (6:26-27). Thus, the story is also included in order to comfort the exiles by reminding them of God's sovereignty over the gentile powers that were oppressing them. Daniel's piety also serves as a further example regarding

how the exiles are to live outside the land. Such piety is evident not only in Daniel's devotional life (6:10) but also in his uprightness in his vocation (6:4). In fact, the only way Daniel's enemies could find grounds to attack him pertained to his relationship with his God.

As Daniel consecrated himself to God by persisting in public prayer even when it was illegal to do so, God not only rescued Daniel from the lion's den but also punished his accusers. The chapter concludes with a reference to Daniel's prosperity during the reign of the Persian king Cyrus. Thus, Daniel's life serves as a textbook example of consecration to God first and foremost while trusting in Him to resolve the remaining issues. The story is included as an example of consecrated living with the hope that the exiles will imitate this same pattern.

The events of chapter 7 line up chiastically with events of chapter 2. Both chapters refer to the specific nations that would trample Israel during the times of the Gentiles. The major difference between the chapters is that this era is narrated from the perspective of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 and is narrated from the perspective of the prophet Daniel in chapter 7. In other words, an anthropocentric perspective of the times of the Gentiles is given in Daniel 2 and a theocentric perspective of the times of the Gentiles is given in Daniel 7. Thus, this era is represented in the form of a dazzling, attractive statue in chapter 2 and is also represented in the form of four grotesque, disgusting beasts in chapter 7.

Because both chapters communicate the same concept, they both teach the same four encouraging lessons to the exiles. First, the exiles would be encouraged to know that this time period would not last forever but rather would be limited to four empires. Second, they would be encouraged to know that God was sovereign over the empires that were oppressing them. God's sovereignty over these empires is apparent in how He limited each of their durations of power. Third, they would be encouraged to know of God's covenant faithfulness through His intention to preserve a remnant throughout this traumatic time period.

Fourth, they would be encouraged to know of God's purpose to honor the Abrahamic covenant by learning of His plan to ultimately restore the kingdom to Israel (7:18). Just as God miraculously delivered the three Hebrews (3) and Daniel (6), the Son of Man (Mark 14:61-62) will similarly miraculously deliver Israel from the little horn (7:8) or the antichrist during the future tribulation period. Daniel's face turning pale as described at the end of the chapter (7:28) might be explained in terms of a negative impact upon Daniel due to the vision's depiction of evil triumphing over Israel during the times of the gentiles. In other

words, Daniel suffered even though the vision also made it clear that evil would only be allowed to run its course temporarily.

Chapters - comprise the Hebrew section of the book. These chapters describe God's prophetic program for Israel from the time of the exile to the establishment of the kingdom to Israel. This section begins with the vision of the ram and the goat in Daniel . This chapter focuses upon the middle two empires of the four kingdoms that Israel would face during the times of the gentiles. These two empires represent Media Persia (8:20) and Greece (8:21). The ram represents the former and the goat represents the latter.

According to the vision, Greece, under the leadership of Alexander the Great, would overthrow the Media-Persian Empire. Shortly thereafter Alexander would meet his demise (323 B.C.) thereby causing his kingdom to be divided among his four generals. This division would then be followed by the rise of a Seleucid named Antiochus Epiphanes who would desecrate the temple for 1150 days. Although he would prosper for a season, he would ultimately meet his demise at the occurrence of the Maccabean revolt on December 25, 165 B.C.

This vision would give further comfort to the exiles by informing them that the two middle empires that would subjugate the nation during the times of the gentiles would only be allowed to reign for a limited period of time. The 1150 days that Antiochus would be allowed to desecrate the temple are mentioned to show that his reign of terror would not last indefinitely but would rather be limited. Although the vision made it clear that these empires would be allowed to subjugate the nation for a limited period of time, the prospect of this subjugation still sickened, exhausted, and astonished Daniel (8:27). However, because of the limits placed upon their reigns, the exiles could be comforted by the fact that God was sovereign over these two kingdoms.

The exiles could also be comforted upon learning that God intended to honor the Abrahamic Covenant by preserving a Jewish remnant despite the oppressiveness of both Media-Persia and Greece (8:14). Finally, the information about the Maccabean revolt (8:14) is mentioned in order to give another example of consecrated living. Because Judas Maccabeus and those associated with him liberated the temple from Antiochus and the Seleucid dynasty at great personal risk, their lives represent yet another example of how God will work on behalf of his people when they consecrate themselves to Him. Daniel includes this information with the hope that the exiles will follow this same pattern of covenant fidelity and piety.

The prophecy of the seventy sevens (9) took place in 538 B.C. (9:1) after 67 of the 70 years of captivity had transpired (9:2). The largest part of the chapter involves Daniel's prayer. This prayer consisted of confession regarding national covenant violations and a request for divine mercy (9:3-19). This prayer is included to again teach the exiles how they are to live. They are to continue to honor God's covenant and recognize that their success outside the land as well as their eventual hope for restoration to the land is linked to their response to God's covenant.

Because Daniel may have suffered from the misguided belief that the kingdom would materialize at the conclusion of the seventy-year captivity, Gabriel is dispatched from heaven (9:20-23) to give Daniel the prophecy of the seventy weeks (). This prophecy explains to Daniel that the kingdom will not be restored to the nation at the end of the seventy-year captivity but rather will only be restored to the nation at the conclusion of a 490-year cycle. The inclusion of the seventy weeks prophecy would greatly encourage the exiles by reminding them of God's plan of fulfilling His covenant promises (9:24). God's covenant faithfulness is seen in how He will preserve a Jewish remnant even in spite of the nation's future rejection of her own messiah (9:25-26a), the resulting A.D. 70 judgment under Titus of Rome (9:26b), and persecution of Israel under the antichrist (9:27). Also, because the time period of the prophecy would only last for a duration of 490 years, the exiles would be encouraged to know that God is sovereign over the nations that would oppress Israel since He had limited the duration of their oppression.

The final vision (10-12) takes place in 536 B.C. The vision is preceded by a spiritual conflict that delayed the angelic visitor who was assigned the responsibility conveying the vision's contents to Daniel (10- 11:1). One of the demonic beings that resisted the angelic messenger was called "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" (10:13). Persia was the kingdom in power at the time Daniel wrote. Another demonic being, whose coming was predicted, is called "the prince of Greece" (10:20). Persia and Greece represented the middle two empires during the times of the gentiles.

The designation of these demons as the "prince of Persia" and "prince of Greece" show that the political entities opposing Israel throughout the times of the Gentiles are demonically energized. Yet, despite such demonic opposition, God is still in control. As the vision will make clear, He will still see to it that He will preserve a Jewish remnant and fulfill Israel's covenants. Thus, the exiles can be comforted through this reminder that God is sovereign over the nations that would oppress her.

The contents of the vision are found in Daniel 11:1- 12:13. The material in Daniel 11 covers the section of the times of the gentiles dealing with Israel's subjugation to Persia (11:2) and Greece (11:3-4). The division of Alexander the Great's Grecian empire among his four generals led to constant conflict between the Ptolemies of Egypt in the south and the Seleucids of Syria and Mesopotamia in the North. These two dynasties repeatedly trampled down the land of Israel as they fought with one another throughout the intertestamental period (11:5-20). Eventually, Antiochus Epiphanes emerged from the Seleucid dynasty. He desecrated the Jewish temple (168-165 B.C.) until the Maccabean revolt curtailed his influence over Israel (11:21-35). Unfortunately for Israel, Antiochus' persecution only represented a type of the persecution that the nation would be subjected to under the tyranny of the antichrist during Daniel's seventieth week. All of this material contributes to the comfort of the exiles by showing them that God will be faithful to His covenant since He will preserve a Jewish remnant even in spite of these horrific waves of persecution. Because the duration of these previously described persecuting empires will be limited, none of them will be allowed to persecute the chosen people indefinitely (11:4). Thus, this limitation again would comfort the exiles by showing God's sovereignty over these persecuting forces. Finally, the information about the Maccabean revolt (11:32) might again be mentioned in order to give the exiles another example of consecrated living. As previously mentioned, Judas Maccabeus and those associated with him liberated the temple from Antiochus and the Seleucid dynasty at great personal risk. Thus, their lives represent yet another example of how God will work on behalf of his people when they consecrate themselves to Him. Daniel again includes this information with the hope that the exiles will follow this same pattern of covenant fidelity and piety.

The theme of the preservation of a Jewish remnant continues into the next chapter. Here, God promises to protect (12:1a), resurrect (12:2), and reward (12:3) a remnant of Israel in spite of the great tribulation associated with Daniel's seventieth week (12:1b). So comprehensive will be God's work in preservation of the Jews that it will even encompass the preservation of His prophetic word (12:4). Just as God will preserve these prophecies, he will similarly preserve Israel. The exiles can take great comfort in the fact that no amount of persecution or tribulation can thwart God's national covenant promises from being fulfilled.

Because the second half of the great tribulation will be limited only to three and one half years (12:5-7), the period of persecution under the antichrist is limited to a specific duration and will not be allowed to extend indefinitely (Matt 24:22). Because God has placed limitations upon it, the deportees can take comfort in the fact that He remains sovereign over this terrible time period. The

preservation theme is again reinforced through the prediction that a Jewish remnant will survive the great tribulation period, pass through the divine judgment (Ezek 20:34-38; Matt 25:31-46), and enter the kingdom (12:8-12). Thus, the exiles can be comforted by God's intention to honor the Abrahamic Covenant through His preservation of a Jewish remnant and establishment of the kingdom through Israel. So sure are these promises that even Daniel himself is promised participation in the future resurrection (12:13).

Recent Interest in Daniel

Here is an interesting observation that you can verify if you will take the time to do it. It is that understanding of the book of Daniel has become a reality only in the last one hundred years. If you examine the literature and the commentaries on the book of Daniel, you will find that expositions of the book have been produced in greater number in the last one hundred years than ever before.

Why? I believe it is because the Spirit of God is stirring up people to remind them that we are living in the end time, and they had better begin to search out the truth that is contained in this book. You say, "Well, does God do such a thing as that?" He certainly does!

Look at chapter 9 of the book of Daniel with me for a moment. Daniel had just such an experience as this I am talking about:

Daniel 9:

- 1 *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans:*
- 2 *In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*
- 3 *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:*

The rest of the chapter is a prayer that Daniel prayed because the Spirit of God stirred his heart to study the book of Jeremiah.

When he studied the book of Jeremiah, he found that the people of Israel were to be in captivity seventy years. Daniel had lived from the very beginning of that captivity. Now the seventy years were nearly up and nobody seemed greatly concerned about it. So as the Spirit of God stirred his heart, he began to study

the book, and as he studied, he began to pray. He prayed in such a way that God brought into motion the things related to the welfare of the nation of Israel.

I believe that in just the same way that God stirred up Daniel to pray in relation to the end of the Babylonian captivity, God is stirring up people today to pursue the study of the book of Daniel, to become familiar with its contents so that they may know how to pray intelligently in relation to the end time.

All of these are reasons for studying the book of Daniel. I mention them because I think that we should have reasons when we delve into the Word of God. When we have reasons, we will consider its importance and not neglect the study.

We told you this is going to be just an introductory message in relation to the book of Daniel. So it would behoove us to say one or two things about the book itself.

Daniel and Revelation

In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, the man Daniel received a word about a great conflict. He understood the word and the vision (Dan 10:1), but he was told to shut up the words and seal the vision until the time of the end (Dan 12:4). The word about the great conflict was for a time, times, and half a time immediately prior to "when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end" (v. 7). Daniel didn't understand how all he saw in the vision could fit into his knowledge of *a time, times, and half a time* (v. 8). He asked about the outcome of all he saw, but he was not given that understanding. He was told to go his way, "for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end" (v. 9). And for two plus millennia, all who have read Daniel's words have understood them and have understood his vision. But neither scholars nor prophecy pundits have understood the sealed and secret prophecy about a great conflict that will occur during the three and half years preceding the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15). The prophecy would not have been sealed if it had been understood earlier than the end of the age.

The argument and contention of this site is that humanity has arrived at the end of the age.

Daniel's vision of what has been recorded in the book of truth (Dan 10:21) was sealed with the prophecy's physical shadow. What Daniel saw was that visible shadow, the pushing of a king of Persia against the king of Greece, with the king of Greece flying out of the west to trample and destroy this king of Persia before he himself will be broken. Following the breaking of this first king of Greece,

four kings and kingdoms arise from his empire. These four quickly become two, and make war against one another as Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires – the kings of the South and of the North, respectively. But the prophecy was about a conflict that occurs at the end of the age. Jesus said understanding was required to comprehend the reality of the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, this abomination of desolation to appear at the time of the end (Matt 24:15). So Antiochus Epiphanes was the visible shadow of an endtime man of perdition -- and this man of perdition is the time-linked shadow of Satan, cast from heaven (Rev 12:9), coming as the true antiChrist for another time, times and half a time (v. 14) immediately after the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:9-14). Thus, the Tribulation is seven years long, with the first time, times, and half a time foreshadowing the second time, times, and half a time. Therefore, the man of perdition's attempt to change times and the law (Dan 7:25) when the holy ones are give into his hand foreshadows the true antiChrist's compelling all who would buy and sell to bear the mark of the beast. The holy ones will live by faith, excluded from spiritual Babylon both prior to its fall and after.

The great conflict that will occur at the end of the age isn't between Christ and Satan wrestling as two schoolboys for the souls of Christians. It isn't an Arab-Israeli war, or even a fundamentalist Islamic war against the world as some prophecy experts teach. It will be between the third and fourth beasts or kings (Dan 7:17) of Daniel's vision in the first year of King Belshazzar, between the infamous beasts of Daniel 7. And as unlikely as it seems, it will be a war between Christian coalitions, with the little horn being an Arian Christian, a human being possessed by Satan. This man of perdition's coming "is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders" (2 Thess 2:9).

The four beasts of Daniel 7 are the four horns that spring from the king of Greece's head when the king's first or great horn is supernaturally broken. And they don't spring into history as four successive world-ruling empires. They are together when the Ancient of Days' court sits in judgment of them (Dan 7:11-12). The first three have their dominion taken away, "but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time" (v. 12). And after their judgment, these first three along with the mortally wound head of the fourth beast appear as an amalgamation, the first beast of Revelation chapter 13.

Therefore, the context for the great conflict is the first three and a half years of the Tribulation – it is indeed for a time, times, and half a time (Dan 7:25). The event that causes the rise of these four kings is the second Passover slaughter of firstborns, spiritual and physical, not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. The king of Greece's first or great horn will be slain at this time – he is presently

fighting against the spiritual *sar* of the kingdom of Persia, with his war going as well as America's war in Iraq proceeds. The United States as the world's leading advocate for democracy fronts in the physical realm for this spiritual king of Greece, a federation of at least five fallen angels. France, the United Nations, and *old* Europe front for the spiritual *sar* of Persia, the ram of Daniel chapter 8.

No one wants to believe that fighting for the noble cause of freedom for Iraqis and for all of the world can possibly be the work of a demonic coalition. It strains credibility to even entertain such a concept. But now that democracy has overtaken the former Soviet Union, what is the status of Moscow's nightlife? Or for that matter, the nightlife in any American city? What is the status of marriage in America? Of American families? Without the active application of the internalized laws of God, received by every born again disciple through receipt of the Holy Spirit, freedom is as much of a curse as it is a blessing. Satan's rebellion was about obtaining personal freedom. It wasn't about living within the laws of God. The Christianity of Christ is about living with the mindset or mental landscape of Jesus Christ, whose kingdom, He told Pilate, is not of this world. True freedom comes with a person doing what the person knows is right in every situation, which for born again disciples means living within the spiritual laws of God that have been written on hearts and minds. True freedom isn't spread with the sword, or with military might. It is spread through the dissemination of ideas, the foremost of which is love for one's neighbor. When this idea has taken root in the mental topography of a person, has grown and brought forth fruit, this person is then truly free.

The angel Gabriel tells Daniel that his vision of the he-goat flying out of the west to trample the ram is "for the time of the end" (Dan 8:17); but most biblical commentaries will diligently *explain* the vision by identifying Alexander the Great as the he-goat. These commentaries and the commentators who have written them do not understand the prophecies of Daniel, for the time of the end has only recently come.

The key to understanding Bible prophecy and biblical eschatology is that the visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20), and the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). What has been included in Holy Writ is not all of Israel's history, but that portion which forms the visible, physical shadow of invisible, spiritual Israel's history. The man Jesus of Nazareth's physical ministry is the visible shadow of His invisible endtime spiritual ministry to spiritual Israel, and herein is a mystery of God. Christ Jesus as the spiritual reality of the role Moses foreshadowed works to liberate Israel from spiritual bondage during the conquering reign of the great horn of the king of Greece. He is at work today just as Moses was at work before the Passover liberation of circumcised Israel.

And spiritual Israel presently reacts to Him just as physical Israel did when He came as the man Jesus of Nazareth.

The Pharisees did not keep the terms of the old written code (John 7:19), the Sinai covenant by which Israel was made the holy nation of God (Exod 19:5-6). Likewise, the greater Christian Church has not kept the terms of the eternal covenant, by which it was made the holy nation of God (1 Pet 2:9). It has taught disciples to ignore or erase the laws of God that were written on disciples' hearts and minds as a condition of receiving the Holy Spirit. As such, today's teachers of Israel are the reality of the taskmasters and foremen that Pharaoh set over the Hebrew nation. And Christ Jesus will cause the king of Babylon to mentally beat these teachers of Israel. He will force this spiritual Pharaoh to "put a sword in [the] hand [his servants] to kill" these Christian leaders (Exod 5:21).

The visions of Daniel and the prophecies of Revelation are about the time of the end, the Tribulation, the spiritual birth pains of Israel bringing many heirs of God to glory. Judgment is now upon the holy nation of Israel. Christ Jesus as the reality of the Azazel goat bears the sins of Israel in the spiritual realm. His death at Calvary paid the penalty for every sin committed in the physical realm. But He will not be crucified a second time. Thus, He will return those sins He bears to their rightful owner, Satan, upon His return as the Messiah – or He will return those sins to the disciples who have committed them if these disciples break covenant with Him and His Father. This is why disciples are not to be surprised when those who have done good are resurrected to life and those who have done evil are resurrected to condemnation (John 5:29). *Doing good* is works, so works are involved. Not penance, not repetitious prayers, but the active choice of choosing to do what the person knows is right whenever faced with a decision. Anything less is hypocrisy. And if a disciple's righteousness does not exceed that of the Pharisees, who were hypocrites, the disciple will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

In the many pages of this site, the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation reveal all of humanity becoming the holy nation of Israel, harvested by living by faith after coming out of fallen Babylon. In addition, articles and essays on these pages actively argue against the many false prophets who will identify the second Passover liberation of spiritual Israel as the sixth trumpet plague, thereby setting disciples up to worship the man of perdition or fallen Satan as Christ Jesus. But wars will cease when Christ returns. As long as there are still wars, Satan hasn't been bound. And during the anti-Christ's reign through his compelling of all who would buy and sell to bear the tattoo of the Cross [*Chi xi stigma*], wars will continue. There will be no peace.

Church and State

In order for mankind to truly return to God with his whole heart, it is absolutely necessary that the individual have freedom of choice in regard to worship and religion so as to be able to follow his conscience and be led of God. The ONLY worship and service acceptable to God is true hearted service; anything forced or pretended is an abomination before God. “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Romans 14:5.

Because ONLY those who turn to God with this whole-hearted and fully persuaded service can be part of God’s kingdom at the end of this world’s history, Satan has always been at work to inspire people to seek to force and rule the consciences of their fellow beings. When religious powers fail to find enough force to do this, then civil power is sought and the combination of church and state used to crush out free religious inquiry, and cast down any who would seek to serve God according to the dictates of their conscience.

Prophecy tells the story of this desolating work which has arisen over and over again to trample rights and freedom underfoot and bathe the world in the blood of martyrs. It warns clearly that we are already on the verge of the biggest confederacy to do this very thing again and shows us behind the scenes the powers bringing it to pass. Study this book prayerfully and carefully for deception is rampant and we MUST be sure to be found on the right side of this conflict soon to hit the world.

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” —Revelation 15:2-3

In conclusion, Daniel has assembled his material for the purpose of encouraging the exiles during the “times of the Gentiles.” He does so by reminding them of God’s sovereignty over the Gentile empires that are oppressing them, by reminding them of God’s covenant faithfulness through His intention of preserving the nation, and by reminding them of God’s intention to ultimately restore the kingdom to Israel. Just as the Mosaic Law taught the nation how they are to live inside the land, Daniel instructs the exiles regarding how they are to live outside the land by exhorting them to consecrate themselves to God.

Messiah (Christ) in the Old Testament for Memory

In Genesis He is the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15).

In Exodus He is the Lamb of God for sinners slain (Ex. 12:5-7, Gen. 12:11).

In Leviticus He is our High Priest (the whole book).

In Numbers He is the Star out of Jacob (Numb. 24:17).

In Deuteronomy He is the Prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18:15).

In Joshua He is the Captain of the Lord's armies (Josh. 5:13-15).

In Judges He is the Angel of the LORD or the messenger of Jehovah (Judges 13:18-21, Judges 13:22-23).

In Ruth He is our Kinsman-Redeemer (Chapter 3).

In Samuel, Kings and Chronicles He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1Sam. 8:1-4, 1Sam. 8:5-8, 9).

In Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther He is the sovereign Lord over all the kingdoms of the earth (entire books).

In Job He is our risen and returning Redeemer (Job 19:25).

In Psalms He is the Blessed Man (Psalm 1:1-3), the Son of Man (Psalm 2:2-5, Psalms 2:6-9, Psalms 2:10-12), the Crucified One (Psalm 22), the Coming One (Psalm 24), the Reigning One (Psalm 72).

In Proverbs He is our Wisdom (Proverbs 14).

In Ecclesiastes He is the forgotten Wise Man (Eccl 9:14-15).

In Song of Solomon He is my Beloved (Song 2:16).

In Isaiah He is our suffering Substitute (Isa 53).

In Jeremiah He is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jeremiah 23:6).

In Lamentations He is the Man of sorrows who weeps for His people (Lam. 1:12-15, Lam. 1:16-18).

In Ezekiel He is the glory of God (Ezek. 1:28).

In Daniel He is the Smiting Stone (Dan. 2:34) and the Companion in the furnace of fire and the den of lions (Dan. 3:24-25; Dan. 6:22).

In Hosea He is David's Greater King (Hos. 3:5).

In Joel He is the Hope of His people (Joel 3:16).

In Amos He is the Rescuer of Israel (Amos 3:12).

In Obadiah He is the Deliverer upon Mount Zion (Oba. 1:17).

In Jonah He is the buried and risen Saviour (compare Matt. 12:40).

In Micah He is the Everlasting God born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2).

In Nahum He is our Stronghold in the day of wrath (Nah. 1:7).

In Habakkuk He is the Anchor of our faith (Hab. 2:4).

In Zephaniah He is in the midst for judgment and cleansing (Zeph. 3:5, Zeph. 3:15).

In Haggai He is Lord of presence and power (Hag. 1:13).

In Zechariah He is the smitten Shepherd (Zech. 13:7).

In Malachi He is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2).

Maranatha – Jesus Comes

Old Testament Scriptures That Describe The Coming Messiah		
The Messianic Prophecy (paraphrased)	Where the prophecy appears in the Old Testament (written between 1450 BC and 430BC)	Jesus' fulfillment of the prophecy in the New Testament (written between 45 and 95 AD)
The Messiah will be the offspring (descendant) of the woman (Eve)	Genesis 3:15	Galatians 4:4
The Messiah will be a descendant of Abraham, through whom everyone on earth will be blessed	Genesis 12:3; 18:18	Acts 3:25,26
The Messiah will be a descendant of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Matthew 1:2 and Luke 3:33
The Messiah will be a prophet like Moses	Deuteronomy 18:15-19	Acts 3:22-23
The Messiah will be the Son of God	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22
The Messiah will be raised from the dead (resurrected)	Psalms 16:10-11	Matthew 28:5-9; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:4-7; John 20:11-16; Acts 1:3 and Acts 2:32
The Messiah crucifixion experience	Psalms 22 (contains 11 prophecies—not all listed here)	Matthew 27:34-50 and John 19:17-30
The Messiah will be sneered at and mocked	Psalms 22:7	Luke 23:11, Luke 23:35-39
The Messiah will be pierced through hands and feet	Psalms 22:16	Luke 23:33 and Luke 24:36-39; John 19:18 and John 20:19-20, John 20:24-27
The Messiah's bones will not be broken (a person's	Psalms 22:17 and Psalms 34:20	John 19:31-33, John 19:36

legs were usually broken after being crucified to speed up their death)		
Men Will Gamble for the Messiah's clothing	Psalm 22:18	Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23-24
The Messiah will accused by false witnesses	Psalm 35:11	Matthew 26:59-60 and Mark 14:56-57
The Messiah will be hated without a cause	Psalm 35:19 and Psalms 69:4	John 15:23-25
The Messiah will be betrayed by a friend	Psalm 41:9	John 13:18-21
The Messiah will ascend to heaven (at the right hand of God)	Psalm 68:18	Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Acts 2:33-35; Acts 3:20-21; Acts 5:31-32; Acts 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20-21; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 10:12; Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22 . . .
The Messiah will be given vinegar and gall to drink	Psalm 69:21	Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23; John 19:29-30
Great kings will pay homage and tribute to the Messiah	Psalm 72:10-11	Matthew 2:1-11
The Messiah is a "stone the builders rejected" who will become the "head cornerstone"	Psalm 118:22-23 and Isaiah 28:16	Matthew 21:42-43; Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-8
The Messiah will be a descendant of David	Psalm 132:11 and Jeremiah 23:5-6; Jere. 33:15-16	Luke 1:32-33
The Messiah will be a born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-35
The Messiah's first spiritual work will be in Galilee	Isaiah 9:1-7	Matthew 4:12-16
The Messiah will make the blind see,	Isaiah 35:5-6	Many places. Also see Matthew 11:3-6 and John 11:47

the deaf hear, etc.		
The Messiah will be beaten, mocked, and spat upon	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67 and Matt. 27:26-31
The “Gospel according to Isaiah”	Isaiah 52:13 Isa. 53:12	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
People will hear and not believe the “arm of the LORD” (Messiah)	Isaiah 53:1	John 12:37-38
The Messiah will be rejected	Isaiah 53:3	Matthew 27:20-25; Mark 15:8-14; Luke 23:18-23; John 19:14-15
The Messiah will be killed	Isaiah 53:5-9	Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37-39; Luke 23:46; John 19:30
The Messiah will be silent in front of his accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 26:62,63 and 27:12-14
The Messiah will be buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:59-60; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:52-53; John 19:38-42
The Messiah will be crucified with criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:32-33
The Messiah is part of the new and everlasting covenant	Isaiah 55:3-4 and Jeremiah 31:31-34	Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:6-13
The Messiah will be our intercessor (intervene for us and plead on our behalf)	Isaiah 59:16	Hebrews 9:15
The Messiah has two missions	Isaiah 61:1-3 (first mission ends at “. . . year of the LORD’s favour”)	First mission: Luke 4:16-21; Second mission: to be fulfilled at the end of the world
The Messiah will come at a specific time	Daniel 9:25-26	Galatians 4:4 and Ephesians 1:10
The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1 and Luke 2:4-7

The Messiah will enter Jerusalem riding a donkey	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-11
The Messiah will be sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 26:15 with Matthew 27:3-10
The Messiah will forsaken by His disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:31, Matt. 26:56
The Messiah will enter the Temple with authority	Malachi 3:1	Malachi 4:1 and Luke 19:45

Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel

**By Arno C. Gaebelein
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Introduction

From the opening verses of the book we learn that Ezekiel was the son of Buzi, the priest, and belonged consequently to the much honoured Zadok family. That he knew the nobility of Jerusalem well and was intimate with them may be indirectly learned from the eleventh chapter. Rabbinical tradition makes Buzi (which means “contempt”) a son of Jeremiah. There is no evidence for this. Eleven years before the complete ruin of the city and the temple by the King of Babylon, Ezekiel was carried away into the captivity. This deportation is recorded in 2 Kings 24:14. Before Ezekiel with the princes and the mighty men were taken into captivity, others had been removed to Babylon, notably Daniel and his three companions. Ezekiel must have known Daniel personally. His name is found three times in this book (Ezekiel 14:14; Ezekiel 14:20; Ezekiel 38:3).

Ezekiel was not a youth, as generally supposed, when he was deported to Babylon, for the matured character of a priest which appears in his writings and his full and intimate acquaintance with the temple service render such a supposition highly improbable. Jewish tradition declares that he exercised already the prophetic office before he was carried away.

The name Ezekiel means “strengthened by God.” It has been stated by some that this is not the original name of the prophet, but his official title, which he adopted on account of his ministry among the people. Very interesting on this

controverted point is the statement in a rabbinical comment. The declaration is made that the prophets of God received their significant names, so closely linked with and expressive of the character of their messages, from above, and not according to the will of their earthly parents. God called them to their work and had them named accordingly before they ever entered upon their offices as prophets. We believe this may be correct, especially in view of Jeremiah 1:5.

Where He Ministered

The place where we find Ezekiel is the river Chebar. This river is now known by the name Kabour. It emptied into the Euphrates north of Babylon and was also called Nar-Kabari, the great canal. Here Nebuchadnezzar had started a colony of captives. In Ezekiel 3:15, the name of the place is given; it was at Tel-abib. In this settlement the prophet seems to have lived. Two passages in the book tell us that he had his own house (Ezekiel 3:24; Ezekiel 8:1). We also know that he was married (Ezekiel 24:16-18). The death of his wife is the only event he mentions of his personal history, and that would probably have not been recorded if it were not connected with his prophetic office. The prophecies he uttered among the captives are carefully dated. The first date is found in Ezekiel 1:1-2.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah

Ezekiel's great prophetic ministry is closely connected with that of Jeremiah. When Ezekiel had his first great vision on the banks of the river Chebar, Jeremiah had already been a prophet for thirty-five years. Only a few years more remained for this great man of God. That Ezekiel must have been acquainted with Jeremiah and his messages of warning and exhortation is more than likely. Yet it is strange there is not a single reference to Jeremiah in the entire book of Ezekiel. It is strange in view of the fact that the messages of these two men have so much in common. Critics make the assertion that Ezekiel as a prophet was moulded by the teaching of Jeremiah. Kuenen claims that Ezekiel must have been for many years the close student of Jeremiah's writings. Before Ezekiel proceeded to write his own prophecies, his mind, it is claimed, had become so saturated with the ideas and language of Jeremiah that every part of his book betrays the influence of his predecessor. This view would make Ezekiel an enthusiastic admirer and copyist of Jeremiah. But in the book of Ezekiel the phrases "Thus saith the Lord God"--"The Word of the Lord came unto me"--occur over and over again. The words he spoke, the mighty messages he delivered, were not produced by the influence of Jeremiah nor by his example, but by the Spirit of God. Other critics have even done greater dishonour to this chosen instrument of the Lord and to the Word he preached. We quote from The New Century Bible: "It would appear that there runs through all the prophet's

activities, at least in the earlier period, a strain of mental abnormality--perhaps of actual malady. By some writers this has been supposed to be a form of catalepsy. Probably Ezekiel was no more a cataleptic than Paul; with equal probability he was what would now be called a 'psychical subject,' and as such liable to trances--and perhaps a clairvoyant." Such are the ridiculous things invented by men, who claim scholarship, and whose aim is to deny the supernatural origin of the words and the visions of the prophets of God.

The fact is that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were called by Jehovah to specific ministries. In their characters and natural temperaments they differed greatly. Jeremiah, assuming, as a very young man, his prophetic office during the reign of Josiah, was called to deliver the messages of the awful judgments which were to come upon Jerusalem and had to witness these in their execution. He was an extremely kind, gentle, and tender-hearted man. Jeremiah is the prophet of a dying nation; the agony of Judah's prolonged death struggle is reproduced with tenfold intensity in the inward conflict which rends the heart of the prophet. Ezekiel was of a different temperament. The deep soul exercise we find so often in Jeremiah, his tender, loving sympathies, are almost entirely absent in Ezekiel. He lacked the emotional character of Jeremiah. He was a man of great energy and vigour; he was stern and had a deep sense of his human responsibility. Both prophets uncover the corrupt conditions of Judah and condemn them. The condemnations in Ezekiel are far more severe than those in Jeremiah. The style of Ezekiel is also different from that employed by his contemporary.

In all this he differs from Jeremiah; and more so in the greater and more complete visions concerning the future.

His Ministry

There is an evident connection between the communication which Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem unto the captives in Babylon and the beginning of Ezekiel's ministry. The letter of Jeremiah is found in chapter 29 of the book of Jeremiah. It is an interesting document. It seems to have been occasioned by a number of false prophets who had appeared among the captives, and who encouraged the rebellious and disobedient spirit which prevailed among the exiles. They prophesied falsely, led the people away, and awakened the delusive hope of an early return from the captivity. While Jeremiah continued to minister to the feeble few and the poor, who were left behind, Ezekiel was engaged among the captives and contended against these false prophets and against the false hopes of the people who gave no evidences of repentance. Inasmuch as Jerusalem had not yet been completely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the captives, who had listened to the false prophets, expected a speedy return to their own land. To

dispel this false hope Jeremiah had sent them the message, “For thus saith the LORD, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place” Jeremiah 29:10. Ezekiel then laboured also to dispel this false hope preached by the prophets, whom the Lord had not sent. By his stern and solemn words, by divinely commanded actions and symbols, he had to deliver the message that there was no hope for Jerusalem. When the catastrophe came at last, his ministry changed. He comforts the disappointed and heartbroken people and delivers his great restoration messages.

This great prophet had to do certain divinely commanded things in the presence of the people who were living in deception after having listened to the false prophets. In Ezekiel 3:24-26 he had to shut himself up, bind himself, and then he was made dumb. Then he was commanded to lie upon his right side and upon his left for 430 days (Ezekiel 4:4-8). In Ezekiel 4:9 he had to eat unclean bread. Then he had to shave his head and beard (Ezekiel 5:1); to carry a captive’s baggage (Ezekiel 12:3-7); when his wife died, he was not to mourn (Ezekiel 24:15-20); and again he lost his speech (Ezekiel 24:27). The key to all this is found in Ezekiel 24:24.

The visions of glory Ezekiel had belong to some of the greatest recorded in the Word of God. Much in the beginning of the book reminds of the last book of the Bible, the Revelation. We mention a few passages to be compared: Ezekiel 1:1-28 with Revelation 4:1-11; Revelation 5:1-14. Ezekiel 3:3 with Revelation 10:10. Ezekiel 8:3 with Revelation 13:14-15. Ezekiel 9:1-11 with Revelation 7:1-17 Eze_10:1-22 with Revelation 8:1-5. The critics declare upon this striking correspondency that “much of the imagery of Revelation is borrowed from Ezekiel.”

The Division of the Book

A careful reading of the book of Ezekiel shows, in the first place, that the prophet received messages and saw visions before the final destruction of Jerusalem, and after that catastrophe had taken place in fulfillment of his inspired predictions, he received other prophecies. The predictions preceding the fall of Jerusalem are the predictions of the judgment to fall upon the city and upon Gentile nations, the enemies of Israel. The predictions Ezekiel received after the city had been destroyed are the predictions of blessing and glory for Israel and Jerusalem in the future. The first part of the book has found a fulfilment in the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. The second part is awaiting its fulfilment at the close of the times of the Gentiles, when Israel will be regathered, restored and the glory of the Lord returns to another temple,

which Ezekiel beheld in a magnificent vision. All will be accomplished when the Lord returns to dwell in the midst of His people, so that the name of the city will be “Jehovah-Shammah”--“the Lord is there” (Ezekiel 48:35). These two main divisions are clearly marked in the book itself In Ezekiel 33:21, after the prophet had received a renewed call as watchman, we read: “And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.” This determines the two parts.

To show the perfect and orderly arrangement of the whole book of Ezekiel we shall give a complete analysis.

I. PREDICTIONS BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Section A. judgment Predictions Concerning Jerusalem (1-24)

- 1. The Vision of the Glory of the Lord and the Call of the Prophet (1-3:14)*
- 2. The judgment Announced, Four Signs and Their Meaning, and the Two Messages. (3:15-7:27)*
- 3. Visions in Relation to Jerusalem (8-11)*
- 4. Signs, Messages, and Parables (12-19)*
- 5. Further and Final Predictions Concerning the Judgment of Jerusalem (20-24)*

Section B. Predictions of judgments against the Nations (25-32)

- 1. Against Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistine (25:1-17)*
- 2. Against Tyrus and Zidon (26-28)*
- 3. Against Egypt (29-32)*

II. PREDICTIONS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Section A. The Watchman and the Shepherds (33-34)

- 1. The Renewed Call of Ezekiel as watchman (33:1-20)*
- 2. Ezekiel's Mouth Opened After Jerusalem's Fall (33:21-33)*
- 3. Message Against the shepherds of Israel (34:1-19)*

4. The True Shepherd and restoration Promised (34:20-26)

Section B. judgment Announced Against Mount Seir and Israel's Final Restoration Promised (35-36)

1. The Message Against Seir and Idumea (35:1-15)

2. The Message of Comfort for Israel (36:1-38)

Section C. The Future Blessings of Israel, the Nation Regathered, Their Enemies Overthrown and the Millennial Temple (37-48)

1. The Vision of the Dry Bones and Judah and Israel Reunited (37:1-28)

2. The Last Enemies, Gog and Magog, and Their Destruction (38-39)

3. The Millennial Temple, and Its Worship, the Division of the Land (40-48)

I. PREDICTIONS BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

A. judgment Predictions Concerning Jerusalem (1-24)

Chapters 1:1-3:14

Chapter 1. Ezekiel's vision of God's glory

Chapters 2-3. Ezekiel's fivefold commission

The Vision of Glory and the Call of the Prophet

1. The introduction (Ezekiel 1:1-3)

2. The vision of God's glory (Ezekiel 1:4-28)

3. Ezekiel's call and commission (Ezekiel 2:1-20)

4. The roll eaten and the repeated commission (Ezekiel 2:9-10; Ezekiel 3:1-14)

3:1-9. As a fearless denunciator

3:10-15. As God's mouthpiece to the exiles

Ezekiel 1:1-3. The introductory words give us the time when Ezekiel was among the captives by the river Chebar. Four things are mentioned by Ezekiel,

who is evidently the author of this book, for he uses the personal pronoun--the heavens were opened--he saw visions of God--the word of the Lord came unto him--the hand of the Lord was upon him. Ezekiel is the only prophet in the Old Testament of whom it is said that he saw the heavens opened. Four times the New Testament mentions opened heavens Matthew 3:16; John 1:51; Revelation 4:1; Revelation 19:11. He then saw the visions of God concerning His governmental dealings with His people Israel. Then the hand of the Lord was also upon him when the word of the Lord had come unto him. Notice the order: An opened heaven, a vision, the call, and enablement by the power of God. Such is still the order for the servants of the Lord. The phrase, "The hand of the LORD was upon him," or came upon me, is found seven times in Ezekiel, in Ezekiel 1:3; Ezekiel 3:14 and Ezekiel 3:22; Ezekiel 8:1; Ezekiel 23:22; Ezekiel 37:1; Ezekiel 40:1.

Ezekiel 1:4-28. Then he had his great and wonderful vision, which is repeatedly mentioned in his book. We find it mentioned again in chapters 10 and 11, where it is seen departing from Jerusalem. Its return is promised in connection with the great millennial temple after the Lord's return (chapter 43). The vision is the vision of the glory of the Lord (Ezekiel 1:28), The vision comes from the north, for a storm cloud of divine indignation from the north (Babylon) was to burst over the house of Judah. The whirlwind, the cloud, and the fire Ezekiel beheld are symbols of glory, the divine presence and judgment. (See Psalms 18:8-13; Habakkuk 3:1-19; Jeremiah 4:12-31). The vision then indicated the presence of the God of Israel and His glory, ready to deal in judgment with His apostate people. The living creatures are the same as mentioned and seen in Revelation 4:6-9. They are the cherubim, not fictitious creatures or symbols, but real beings. Their position is in connection with the throne. But upon the throne there was one who had the likeness as the appearance of a man. And this man was enshrouded in glory, with the rainbow about him. All this shows forth the glory of Him who is God' vision, glory and presence, the Son of God. It anticipates the Lord Jesus Christ, His exaltation upon the throne, government and judgment resting in His hands, who is now the Man in the glory. While the cherubim with their fourfold faces also symbolize the Lord Jesus, here in this vision they are seen in connection with judgment. It is the same in Revelation 6:1-17; Revelation 15:7. And then the wheels and their work. In them was the spirit of these great creatures; the rims of the wheels (not rings) were full of eyes. There was an orderly movement of these wheels. The wheels are on the chariot upon which rested the throne of God. They show forth and symbolize the purposes of God in the execution of His inerrant governmental dealings on earth. God controls it all, and His Spirit directs every movement. Much that is ridiculous has been written on this, and some would-be expositors claim that Ezekiel beheld an acroplane.

“Intelligence, strength, stability and swiftness in judgment, and, withal, the movement of the whole course of earthly events, depended on the throne. This living energy animated the whole. The cherubic supporters of the throne, full of eyes themselves, moved by it; the wheels of God’s government moved by the same spirit, and went straight forward. All was subservient to the will and purpose of Him who sat on the throne judging right. Majesty, government and providence united to form the throne of His glory. But all the instruments of His glory were below the firmament; He whom they glorified was above” (Synopsis of the Bible).

Chapter 2

Verses 1-8

Ezekiel 2:1-8. We see Ezekiel prostrate upon his face. Then a voice spoke, not the voice of a cherubim; while in Revelation the cherubim speak, in Ezekiel they are silent, Jehovah addressed Ezekiel as son of man; the title which is found exactly one hundred times in this book. Daniel only besides Ezekiel is called by this name. Our Lord called Himself by that name and used it in connection with His suffering, exaltation, glory, and coming again. Ezekiel, too, passed through much suffering, passing symbolically through sufferings which the nation at large was to undergo. He is, therefore, in a measure a type of the Messiah, who took Israel’s sin and shame upon Himself.

The Word which spoke was followed by the Spirit--”and the Spirit entered into me when He spoke unto me.” Thus the Word and the Spirit are always connected. Then Ezekiel received his commission. He is sent to an impudent and hard-hearted people. His message is to begin with: “Thus saith Jehovah-God.” The sender is the Lord; the message is from Him. Then the sender gives also assurance and encouragement.

Verses 10-14

Ezekiel 2:9-10; Ezekiel 3:1-14. Compare the roll here with Zechariah 5:1-4; with the one of Revelation 5:1-14, which the Lamb receives and opens, and the little roll in Revelation 10:9-10. These rolls have the same meaning, namely, the Word itself, the message of tribulation and judgment, which is written therein.

The Word must be received and eaten, that is the spiritual lesson. Ezekiel obeyed. It was self surrender and though the message was a hard message, yet it was sweet unto him. Compare with Jeremiah 15:16. Ezekiel was to speak the words of the Lord unto them; and the sender predicts failure. “The house of

Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto Me.” It was to make no difference to the prophet. His commission was to speak Jehovah’s words. Then cherubim and wheels are in motion. He is lifted up and Jehovah’s hand is strong upon him.

Chapter 3

Chapters 3:15-7:27

The Judgment Announced, the Four Signs and Their Meaning, and the Two Messages

This section extends from chapter 3:15 to the close of the seventh chapter. The prophet is told of his great responsibility as watchman, and has to enact four signs. Two solemn messages close this section. The first message first predicts that the sword is to come upon the land and disperse them; the second message predicts the end.

1. The new charge and Ezekiel’s new experience (Ezekiel 3:15-27)

As a watchman (Ezekiel 3:16-21)

As a faithful herald (Ezekiel 3:22-27)

2. The sign of the tile (Ezekiel 4:1-3) on (Ezekiel 4:4-8)

3. The sign of the prophet’s physical position (Ezekiel 4:4-8)

4. The sign of the famine and the defiled bread (Ezekiel 4:9-17)

5. The sign of the shaving of head and face (Ezekiel 5:1-4)

6. The message of denunciation (Ezekiel 5:5-17)

7. The first judgment message: I will bring a sword upon you (Ezekiel 6:1-14)

8. The second judgment message: The end is at hand (Ezekiel 7:1-27)

Ezekiel 3:15-27. He had been transported by the power of God from the river Chebar to Tel-abib, where a number of captives dwelt. He sat for seven days in their presence without opening his lips. (See Job 2:13.) The silence of Ezekiel was broken by the Lord, who spoke to him and gave him a new charge, that of a watchman unto the house of Israel. His duty was to be twofold: First, to hear the

word of the Lord from His own lips, and then to give the warning. It is a solemn message and charge, making known to the prophet his great responsibility.

The passage, as well as the corresponding one in Ezekiel 33:1-20, has been often used in the defence of what is termed “falling from grace,”--that a true believer, who is saved by grace, may by sinning become unsaved again and then perish in his sins like the wicked. The words “fallen from grace” are found only once in the Bible, that is in Galatians 5:4. The context shows what they mean. If a believer goes to the law to be justified before God, if he tries by his own works, and by ordinances, to be righteous before God, he abandons the ground of grace. The dispensation in which we live is the dispensation of grace; grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord Romans 5:20. The message delivered by God to Ezekiel is in fullest keeping with the character of the law-covenant, though grace is also manifested in it. Righteousness has not the same meaning here as in the New Testament. We are constituted righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. It is now not the question of doing righteous deeds in order to be saved and live. We are saved by grace through faith. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him, who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness” Romans 4:4. And he who is justified by faith has peace With God. The true believer may sin, but he does not deliberately practice and live in sin, for “he that is born of God doth not commit (practice) sin” 1 John 3:9. If he falls in sin, a gracious provision is made. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and therefore we can confess our sins; forgiveness and cleansing follow according to the divine promise 1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1-22).

Then he was commanded to go into the plain, where he again beheld the glory of the Lord and fell on his face. After that, he was shut up in his house; they were to put bands upon him and bind him. He was not to go among the captives, and God made him dumb (verses 25-26). Yet this dumbness was not complete or constant. Finally it ceased altogether. That was after Jerusalem had fallen (Ezekiel 33:21-22). The dumbness was a sign to the nation--the sign of God's displeasure and the coming judgment upon Jerusalem (Ezekiel 24:27).

Chapter 4

Chapters 4-5. Symbolic prophecies of Jerusalem's siege

Verses 1-17

The sign of the brick

Ezekiel 4:1-3. The word tile means "brick." They were used by the Babylonians to preserve their records, and many have been found marked with building plans, etc. The sign of the tile foretells the siege of Jerusalem and Jehovah's opposition against the city.

Sign of the prophet's physical position

Ezekiel 4:4-8. While in the preceding sign Jehovah's action against Jerusalem was pictured, in this new sign a portrayal is given of the punishment which should come upon the inhabitants of the city. In his own person Ezekiel had to experience the great degradation and judgment which was to fall upon all the people. The critical school has invented all kinds of theories to explain, or rather to explain away, the divine command given to the prophet. They say that probably Ezekiel suffered from some form of epilepsy or catalepsy; they also point out the physical impossibility for a man to lie continuously for 390 days on his left side. But it says nowhere that the Prophet should be in that position day and night during these allotted days. The 390 and 40 days are symbolical. They mean years, giving us a total of 430 years. This reminds us of [Exodus 12:40-41](#), where the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt is given as 430 years.

But the 390 years apply more specifically to Israel, the period of unfaithfulness of the ten tribes, beginning with Jeroboam. [1 Kings 11:31](#)). The 40 years describe the unfaithfulness of the house of Judah. The captives were reminded by the prophet's position of the shameful history of their long apostasy. But more than that. The Lord said to Ezekiel: "I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity... so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel." The sign, therefore, pictured the actual punishment which was now to fall upon the nation.

Sign of famine

Ezekiel 4:9-17. Both the sign of the famine and the bread baked in an unclean manner predict the horrors of famine in connection with the siege of Jerusalem, and how the people in the subsequent captivity among the Gentiles should live in defilement.

Chapter 5

Verses 1-17. Sign of the shaved head and beard

Ezekiel 5:1-4. The sharp knife is the symbol of the king of Babylon. (See Isaiah 7:20.) He was God's instrument in the execution of His wrath; the people are represented by the hair. The third part of the hair burned with fire pictures the fate of a part of the people during the siege. The pestilence and the famine were also to consume them. Only a few in number, a small remnant, were to be preserved, as indicated when Ezekiel took a few hairs and bound them in his skirt.

Ezekiel 5:5-17. These solemn words should be carefully read. In connection with them there ought to be read Jeremiah's lamentations, for Jeremiah's outburst of sorrow shows the literal fulfillment of this message. (See Ezekiel 5:10 and compare with Lamentations 4:10.)



Judgment against the mountains of Israel

Figuratively, 'the mountains of Israel' stood for the high places, used as outdoor pagan sanctuaries while the sword, spoke of their destruction, with their cultic personnel and devotees.

Chapter 6

Judgment against the mountains of Israel

Verses 1-14

Verses 1-7. Judgment upon the idolatry of the high places

Verses 8-14. The surviving remnant

Ezekiel 6:1-14. The mountains of Israel are mentioned first, because they were the places where the people practiced idolatry; they were the high places so often mentioned in the historical books. (Read Leviticus 26:30-33.) Hundreds of years before, Moses wrote these words; and now they were all to be fulfilled. But the Lord also promised that a remnant should be left. That remnant would acknowledge the evil they had done. “They shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.” The words “because I am broken with their whorish heart” means literally translated, “When I shall have broken their whorish heart which has departed from Me.” No judgment which has ever come upon Israel made a complete end of the nation. A remnant always remained and returned to the Lord. (See Romans 11:5.) During the greatest and longest judgment which has come upon that nation, their world-wide dispersion during this present age, there is also a remnant still among them. When the Lord resumes His dealings with them during the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, with which our age closes, a remnant from among them will turn to Him and be saved. That remnant will be carried through the judgments of the great tribulation and receive the promised kingdom.

Chapter 7

The end imminent

Verses 1-27

Verses 1-9. The doom of the city

Verses 10-27. Horror in the city

Ezekiel 7:1-27. This chapter closes the first great message of Ezekiel. This great judgment message is written in beautiful language, which, in the Authorized Version, is marred by numerous incorrect renderings. The reader will find a reliable metrical translation in our larger commentary on Ezekiel.

First, the end is announced to come upon the entire land; it could no longer be averted.

There is another day coming in which the Lord will deal in fearful judgments with this earth. Now is the day of salvation in which God speaks in love through His Son, When wickedness and apostasy has reached its climax, the day of salvation will end and “the day of vengeance of our God” will begin. Then He will speak in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure Psalms 2:5. Then will they say to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Revelation 6:16-17. God’s judgments for the future are as sure as were His judgments in the past. There is a set time, the day of the Lord, when He, to whom the Father has given all judgments, will tread “the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty” Revelation 19:15.

Then follows a solemn description of the doom of Jerusalem and the reasons why such a judgment is executed.

Chapter 8

Verses 1-18

Chapters 8-11

8-9. Vision of Jerusalem’s sin

Visions in Relation to Jerusalem

- 1. The vision of idolatry and abomination in the temple (Ezekiel 8:1-18)*
- 2. The vision of the linen-clothed man with the inkhorn, and punishment for idolatry (Ezekiel 9:1-11)*
- 3. The vision of the coals of fire (Ezekiel 10:1-22)*
- 4. The vision concerning the leaders: The glory departs (Ezekiel 11:1-25)*

Ezekiel 8:1-18. This vision shows the abomination which prevailed in the temple of Jehovah.

In the visions of God, Ezekiel is brought to the door of the inner gate that looks to the north. Here was the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. Some

have taken this and the following visions to be retrospective. It has been said, "It was as if he were translated back to Jerusalem, and to the time when these things were occurring." Such is the view of some critics; however, it is untenable. These visions would lose their meaning if the prophet seemed to be translated back to Jerusalem and to the time when these abominations had happened in Israel's past history. Later we find the names of persons given, whom he saw. They certainly were living persons known to the prophet Ezekiel and his contemporaries. One of them died while Ezekiel prophesied (Ezekiel 11:13). What was the image of jealousy which provoketh to jealousy? It was an idol. The word is used in Deuteronomy 4:16, where it is translated "graven image." It is also found in 2 Chronicles 33:7; 2 Chronicles 33:15, where it refers to the idol, which Manasseh had made and put up in the temple.

After Manasseh's idolatry came Josiah's great reformation. After his death, Judah plunged into greater wickedness under the reign of wicked kings, and a revival of idolatry followed once more. Such a wrath-provoking idol was beheld by the prophet. This image they worshipped. "Son of man, seest thou what they do?" They must have lain prostrate before that idol. And yet the glory of the God of Israel was still there.

That there will be a similar scene enacted in a future temple, during the great tribulation, is well known to all students of prophecy. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 and Revelation 13:1-18.)

The prophet saw creeping things and beasts worshipped; the elders and the people were practising Egyptian idolatry of the most degrading kind. Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, is especially mentioned. Shaphan was the scribe, who received from the high priest, Hilkiah, the book of the law, and read it before King Josiah 2 Kings 22:8-20; Jeremiah 39:14. The son of this God-fearing scribe was the leader of the idolators. And these idol worshippers, each in his chamber of imagery (probably individual cells), said: "This LORD seeth us not; the LORD has forsaken the earth." They denied His omniscience and omnipresence. The apostasy in Christendom is going the same road.

The women wept for Tammuz, the Babylonian "Dumuzi," the god of spring, who dies, and revives each year. It was a vile, obscene cult, for with the worship of Tammuz were connected immoral, licentious ceremonies. Sun-worship was the crown of all these abominations. (See Ezekiel 8:16-18).

Chapter 9

Vision of punishment for idolatry

Verses 1-11

Ezekiel 9:1-11. The six men mentioned are angels, into whose hands the city is given. Angels are used in judgments past and future. (See Matthew 13:41; Matthew 16:27; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12.) Angels are likewise prominently mentioned in the book of Revelation. There is a striking correspondence between this chapter and Revelation 7:1-3. Those who sigh and weep constitute the remnant which have no sympathy with the abominations. They are marked for preservation. Thus a remnant was then kept. Well may we remember that now, in the professing church, in the midst of the apostasy, there is also a faithful remnant who sigh and cry and who have the special promise of the Lord (Revelation 3:10).

The word “mark” in the Hebrew is “Tav,” the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Its literal meaning is “cross.” This letter “T” was a cross in the older Hebrew script as well as in the Phoenician and Samaritan. The Egyptians also used a cross in their language, with them it was a sign of life. Ancient Jewish tradition gives the information that the blood sprinkled in Egypt on the doorpost Exodus 12:23 was in the form of a cross. All this is interesting. To this we may add that in Genesis 4:15, the mark set upon Cain, an entirely different word is used.

Then the command was literally executed.

Chapter 10

10-11. Departure of the Lord from His Temple

The renewed vision of God’s glory

Ezekiel 10:1-22. Once more the glory vision appears. The linen clothed man who had done the marking in the previous chapter is now executing judgment. Who is He? Evidently more than an angel. That he is a supernatural being is clear. He held the place of pre-eminence among the other angels (Ezekiel 9:2-4). This angel is the Angel of the Lord, the same who appeared to the patriarchs, to Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and to others. It is the Son of God in the garb of an angel. In the same form he also appeared to Daniel on the banks of the river Hiddekel. “Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes

as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude” Daniel 10:5-21. Here we have a complete description of the same person whom Ezekiel saw taking the coals of fire and scattering them over Jerusalem. judgment upon the guilty city came from His hands.

When we turn to the book of Revelation, we find a similar scene which has not yet been enacted. A careful comparison of this scene here with Revelation 8:3-5 is suggested. This angel who presents the prayers before the throne and who casts the judgment fires on the earth is the same who received the seven-sealed book Revelation 5:11. It is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple; over its portals “Ichabod” (the glory is departed) was now to be written.

Chapter 11

Ichabod, the glory departs

Ezekiel 11:1-25. The priests and the leaders of the nation were steeped in wickedness, defied God and the judgments His prophets had announced. They devised mischief (or iniquity) and gave wicked counsel. Their wicked counsel consisted in disobedience against Jehovah and His Word. In regard to the judgment they said, “It is not the time to build houses; this is the cauldron and we are the flesh.” They knew of Jeremiah’s letter which he had sent to the elders who were carried away captives. In that letter, Jeremiah, believing God’s Word concerning the long duration of the captivity, gave the advice, “Build ye houses and dwell in them” Jeremiah 29:1-32. They ridiculed that divinely given advice. They still thought themselves safe in Jerusalem. The phrase “this is the cauldron” means the city of Jerusalem; and we are the “flesh” themselves. As the flesh in the cauldron is preserved from the fire by the cauldron itself, so they felt themselves secure in the doomed city. That these wicked leaders were still in the city shows that the judgment in chapter 9 was not a complete judgment. It began at the sanctuary, and the wicked worshippers Ezekiel saw in his vision were smitten first of all, while the man with the inkhorn marked the entire remnant for preservation. Then the Spirit fell upon Ezekiel and he uttered Jehovah’s message.

The message of judgment is followed by a message of mercy. Ezekiel 11:14-21 are yet to be fulfilled in that nation. The final departure of the visible glory of the Lord concludes this chapter. It held its ascension from the Mount of Olives. From the same place, He who is the Lord of Glory and reveals the glory of the

Lord, went back to the Father. And when He returns “His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives” Zechariah 14:1-21. It will be at that blessed time when Israel and Jerusalem will behold the return of the glory, which Ezekiel beheld departing from city and temple.

Chapter 12

The exile portrayed in symbol

Chapters 12-19

Signs, Messages, and Parables

- 1. Signs given through the prophet (Ezekiel 12:1-20)*
- 2. The message of speedy judgment (Ezekiel 12:21-28)*
- 3. The message against false prophets and prophetesses. (Ezekiel 13:1-23)*
- 4. The message against the elders (Ezekiel 14:1-23)*
- 5. The parable of the vine given to the fire (Ezekiel 15:1-8)*
- 6. The parable of the abandoned child and Israel’s whoredom (Ezekiel 16:1-63)*
- 7. The parable of the riddle of the two eagles and the vine (Ezekiel 17:1-24)*
- 8. The message of the righteous judgments of God (Ezekiel 18:1-32)*
- 9. The Lamentations for the Princes of Israel (Ezekiel 19:1-14)*

With the twelfth chapter a new section of this book begins, ending with chapter 19.

Verses 1-20. Signs given through Ezekiel

Ezekiel 12:1-20. They were a rebellious house and the prophet is told to do something, that they might consider. He was to attire himself like one who goes on a journey with sandals on his feet, a staff in his hand, a burden on his shoulder. He was told to move from place to place. The meaning of all this is explained in Ezekiel 12:8-16. The prince in Jerusalem is Zedekiah. His attempt to flee from Jerusalem, and his fate of having his eyes put out by the king of Babylon, his captivity and death are here clearly predicted. The following

passages must be read and studied in connection with this chapter Jeremiah 39:4; Jeremiah 52:10-34; 2 Kings 25:1-30.

Verses 21-28. Message of impending judgment

Ezekiel 12:21-28. The false prophets had preached a false hope, “The days are prolonged and every vision faileth.” God had announced another message. Had they believed what God had spoken, that judgment was imminent, they would have surely repented and turned unto the Lord. Unbelief was responsible for their condition; in this they were sustained by lying prophets. And the Lord answered these false prophets. He changed the lying message and told them “the days are at hand”--the effect of every vision. All false visions, divinations and hopes were to cease. His Word is now to be done.

Chapters 13-14. Condemnation of false prophetism

Chapter 13

Divine denunciation of false prophets

Ezekiel 13:1-23. And now the Lord speaks through Ezekiel about the false prophets in the midst of His people. They prophesied out of their own hearts; or as it might be rendered, “Who prophesy from their own mind without having seen.” Such they were and such are the false teachers of this present age 2 Peter 2:1-22. Of such our Lord warned: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” Matthew 7:15. Every man who prophesies out of his own heart, who utters his own mind, whose preaching and teaching is not according to the oracles of God, is a false prophet, a blind leader of the blind. Like false prophets in Israel the false teachers in Christendom are the cause of the spiritual condition of the professing people of God. Of all such it is true what the Lord said through Ezekiel: “They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, “The Lord saith, and the Lord has not sent them.” They are self-called and self-sent. Behind them stands the father of lies 1 Kings 22:19-53; 1 Timothy 4:11. Next we find in Ezekiel 13:8-16 their condemnation and punishment. But there were also false women prophets; they practised occultism.

All this is also done in the very midst of Christendom in the twentieth century. Women prophets, the most subtle instruments of Satan, are plentiful in these days. The fact has often been pointed out that the prominent leaders in the evil cults of the last days are women. There has been a strange modern-day revival of occult practices upon Christian ground. Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Christian Science belong to this class. All three started with women.

Spiritualism with its mediums, fortune-tellers and necromancers is almost entirely in the hands of women, who claim to be religious leaders. The same is true of theosophy, with its Hindu philosophy, and occultism, surrounded with an air of unholy mysticism. Christian Science is closely related to these two cults. Its founder practiced for a time the calling of a medium.

Significant is the description of their evil testimony as given in Ezekiel 13:22.

Chapter 14

Depravity of the idol-loving elders

Ezekiel 14:1-23. These inquiring elders, with wickedness in their hearts, give another illustration of the depth of degradation in which the people had sunk. He who searches the hearts knew what was in them. They came with pious, religious pretensions. It sounded well to inquire of the Lord and seek the prophet-priest for that purpose. Their hearts were full of evil. While their lips spoke of asking the Lord, their hearts were full of idolatry. They liked idolatry. Their hearts were in it and this stumbling-block of their iniquity they had put before their faces, which means they openly defied the Lord God of Israel by their doings. "Should I be inquired of at all by them?" To seek the Lord and inquire of Him in such a condition reveals a brazen spirit and the deepest depravity. Yet this also belongs to the conditions in which the professing people of God are when judgment overtakes them.

Ezekiel 14:12-23 contain an additional judgment message. The threatened judgment cannot be averted; it is unavoidable. Famine is to come and the noisome beasts, symbolical of Gentile world powers, as Daniel beheld them in his vision Daniel 7:1-28. The judgment message closes again with a message of mercy and comfort for the remnant.

Chapter 15

Allegory of the vine

Verses 1-5. The allegory

Verses 6-8. The meaning

Ezekiel 15:1-8. This is the first of three parables to demonstrate still further the delusion of their false hope that deliverance would come. The vine is a type of Israel Psalms 80:8-19; Isaiah 5:1-30, and Hosea 10:1. The vine is only good for one thing, which is the bearing of fruit; apart from this it is worthless. The wood

cannot be used for anything whatever. It is good for nothing but burning. Nebuchadnezzar carried out this sentence 2 Kings 25:9. It reminds us also of the parable of the vine our Lord spoke, in which, speaking of the unfruitful branch, He said, "Men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" John 15:6. Some apply this also to Israel; it means the professing believer, who professes to be a branch in the true vine.

Chapter 16

The allegory of the faithless wife

Verses 1-52. Israel's idolatry described.

Verses 53-63. Promise of gracious restoration

Ezekiel 16:1-63. This chapter consists of four sections: 1. The parable of the abandoned child. 2. Jerusalem's idolatries and moral degradation (Ezekiel 16:15-34). 3. The doom of Jerusalem and the promise of restoration (Ezekiel 16:35-59). 4. The covenant remembered (Ezekiel 16:60-63).

The parable of the abandoned child, and what the gracious Lord did for the little one is a most beautiful demonstration of what He had done in His sovereign love and grace for Jerusalem. It must be read first with this in mind. But this sweet parable illustrates also, as few other portions in the Old Testament do, the grace which the Lord bestows upon the believer in the gospel. Thy father an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite reminds us of what is true of all men, so tersely expressed in David's confession, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did MY mother conceive me" Psalms 51:5. Like the child pictured in the parable, we are lost, perishing in the field (the world). What could that perishing child do to save itself? Even so we cannot do anything to save ourselves. The Lord passing by had compassion and spoke His Word of power--Live. He came from heaven to this earth, into the field to seek and save what is lost. He found man in the vile and helpless condition so aptly pictured by the miserable child. And more than that, He died to save man. He gave His life so that we might live. The first thing He does for the believing sinner is to give him life. When the spiritual dead hear His voice they live. The washing with water, the anointing with oil (type of the Holy Spirit), the announcement "thou becamest Mine," as well as the clothing, the beautifying and the crowning, all illustrate what His marvelous grace does for the trusting, believing sinner. It is all grace from start to finish, from the impartation of life in the new birth to the crowning in glory.

Upon this beautiful background of Jehovah's love and mercy, there is written next the dark picture of Jerusalem's whoredoms, symbolical of her wicked

idolatries. It started all with pride (Ezekiel 16:15). Jerusalem did not acknowledge the giver. Instead of worshipping Him, they established the high places and conformed to all the wicked Canaanitish practices. Ezekiel 16:15-34 give the depth of Jerusalem's apostasy.

Then the Lord addresseth her whom He loved, and who had turned away from Him as a harlot. Her doom and judgment is announced which once more is followed by the promise of mercy and restoration. The restoration of Sodom and her daughters has puzzled many. It has been used by Universalists, Russellites, Restorationists, teachers of Reconciliationism and other errorists to back up their inventions of a second chance of the wicked dead, or the ultimate salvation of the entire race. The restoration promises have nothing to do with the restoration of the wicked dead. They are promises of national restoration. It is a mistake to look in the Old Testament for any doctrines concerning the future state. Three facts will show this error of making the Old Testament teach the restoration of the wicked.

1. The Old Testament is not that part of the divine revelation where teachings and doctrines about the future state are given.

This is a most important fact. The Old Testament shows man as upon the earth, on this side of death, and not beyond death. The future of Israel on the earth, their supremacy and destiny of glory amidst the nations of the earth, the judgments of God in the earth, as well as the future blessings for the nations inhabiting the earth during the coming age, are all clearly revealed in the Old Testament. The state after death, that which is beyond this life, is shrouded in mystery in the Old Testament Scriptures. That great judgment, the great white throne judgment, is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, nor do we read a word there of "the second death." Resurrection of the dead, no doubt, was known to individual saints of Old Testament times; the Spirit of God revealed it to their hearts, but as a doctrine, resurrection is not found in the Old Testament. In Psalms 16:1-11 is revealed the hope of resurrection of the body, and there is a prophecy of the resurrection of our Lord.

2. Should we find anything in the Old Testament concerning the future state, the state of the righteous and the unrighteous after death, such a hint or statement can only be rightly understood and interpreted by the great doctrine concerning the future state as revealed in the New Testament.

By this, of course, we do not say that the Old Testament needs correction by the revelation of the New, nor do we say that the Old is inferior to the New; all is the Word of God. However, as the Old Testament does not show man's

condition after death, any passage which appears to relate to such a condition must be interpreted by the full light as given in the New Testament.

3. If such passages as Ezekiel 16:53 and Ezekiel 37:1-14, etc., teach the restitution of the wicked by resurrection for another chance, we must then find such a doctrine of the restoration most clearly and fully revealed as one of the great doctrines of the New Testament.

In vain, however, do we look in the New Testament for such a restoration--second probation doctrine. Such a doctrine is not even hinted at in the New. However, the New Testament gives the fullest revelation concerning resurrection and the future state. It tells us that there is indeed a resurrection of the body for every human being. This revelation of resurrection as contained in the New Testament leaves no room whatever for the Sodomites and all the wicked idolatrous Israelites to be raised up for another chance. Our Lord, in John 5:29, reveals a twofold resurrection, a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto damnation. The human race, those who have died, are therefore in resurrection divided into two classes; they must come forth either unto life or unto damnation: there is no middle class. Later the New Testament teaches a first resurrection, an out-resurrection from the dead. Only those who have believed and died in Christ will have a share in this resurrection. Both Old and New Testament saints belong to it, but none have a part in it who died in their sins. The rest of the dead, meaning of course, the wicked dead, are not raised up till after the thousand years. This is a second resurrection, and this takes place not when the Lord comes the second time, but after His millennial reign Revelation 20:1-15. The subjects of this second resurrection appear before the great white throne and are cast into the lake of fire. Now, these teachers claim that the return of Sodom and Samaria to their former estate means their resurrection for another chance when the Lord comes. But, as these departed, wicked people are wicked still, how can they have part in the first resurrection when the Lord comes, which is the resurrection of the righteous?

They surely cannot belong to this resurrection. And there is nowhere in the New Testament a word about another special resurrection in which all the wicked are raised from the dead for another chance. After the resurrection of the righteous dead there is but one more resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked unto damnation. In the light of these facts the flimsy theory built upon misapplied texts of the Old Testament, texts which relate to national restoration and blessing, breaks down completely. And now, having seen what the statements in this chapter of Ezekiel do not mean, let us see what is their meaning. While these statements cannot mean the resurrection of individuals, they mean a national restoration. There is promised in many passages of the Old Testament a

national restoration of Israel. The ten tribes are to be brought back to their former possessions. Historically they have been lost. But they are not lost to God. He knows where they are. He has kept track of them, and in His own time He will make good the promises of their restoration and will bring back the remnants of the house of Israel, now scattered still among the nations. The Jews will also be restored to their territory. Repeatedly this national restoration of the ancient people is promised under the picture of a resurrection. But to other nations there is also promised such a national restoration in the days to come, when the Lord comes and begins His Kingdom reign over the earth. Such a national revival is beyond a doubt promised for a future day to Moab, Ammon, Assyria, and Egypt. Edom and Babylon, however, are doomed as nations and no revival whatever is promised to them.

We do not know, of course, how God will accomplish these promises of restoration and national revivals, and how He will gather the remnants of these former nations from the great sea of nations. We can leave this and other difficulties with Him who will see to the fulfillment of all these things.



Boat-building scene, painted limestone relief from Thebes

Chapter 17

The allegory of the eagles and the cedar

Verses 1-21 The allegory of the eagles

Verses 22-24. The allegory of the cedar

Ezekiel 17:1-24. The great eagle mentioned first is Nebuchadnezzar. (See Jeremiah 48:40; Jeremiah 49:22). He came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar, the symbol of the house of David, which was conquered by this eagle. Nebuchadnezzar made the youngest son of Josiah king over Judah and called him Zedekiah. This action is described in verse 5. The other great eagle is Hophra, the king of Egypt. To him Zedekiah turned for help. The interpretation and application of this parable is given in Ezekiel 17:11-21. The following passages should be read as helpful to the understanding of these verses: 2 Chronicles 36:13; Jeremiah 27:1-22; Jeremiah 37:5-21; Jeremiah 52:11.

Israel's hope and Israel's future come once more into view in Ezekiel 17:22-24. The cedar is the royal house of David. God in His sovereignty promises to take "of its young shoots a tender one and I will plant it upon a high and eminent mountain." This tender one is the Messiah, the Son of David. It is the same promise as given in the book of Isaiah. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" Isaiah 11:11. "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground" Isaiah 53:2. The high and eminent mountain typifies Mount Zion, and the kingdom of Messiah is pictured in the closing verses of the chapter. The high tree which is brought low, the green tree which is dried up, is the symbol of Gentile world-power. The low tree which is exalted and the dry tree which is made to flourish stands for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel when the Son of David, our Lord, comes again. Then the high tree will be cut down and the now flourishing Gentile dominion will dry up; Israel the low tree will be exalted, and the long, dry and barren nation will bring its blessed fruit.

Chapters 18-19

18. Divine judgment and individual responsibility

Verses 1-13. False accusation against God and the divine answer

Verses 14-32. Ezekiel's doctrine of individual responsibility

19. Lament for the princes of Israel

Verses 1-9. Lamentation for the princes

Verses 10-14. Lament for the land

Ezekiel 19:1-14. This lamentation has two sections. The lamentations for the princes come first (Ezekiel 19:1-9), and that is followed by the lamentation for the land of Judah (Ezekiel 19:10-14).

The princes are Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin. King Jehoahaz was carried away captive into Egypt 2 Kings 23:33; his fate is lamented in Ezekiel 19:1-4. King Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon and he is lamented in Ezekiel 19:5-9. In the lamentation for the land of Judah the vine is once more mentioned. The vine is burned, the fruit devoured and there is no scepter in Judah.

Chapter 20

Chapters 20-24

Further and Final Predictions Concerning the judgment of Jerusalem

1. Jehovah rehearses His mercies bestowed upon Israel (Ezekiel 20:1-49)

2. The impending judgment announced (Ezekiel 21:1-32)

3. Jerusalem's sins and whoredom (Ezekiel 22:1-31; Ezekiel 23:1-49)

4. The parable of the boiling pot and the last word (Ezekiel 24:1-27)

20. Rehearsal of divine mercy to Israel

Verses 1-8. Israel's sins in Egypt

Verses 9-26. Israel's sins in the wilderness

Verses 27-49. Israel's sins in the land

Ezekiel 20:1-49. The chapter contains a divine retrospect and an arraignment of the people for their national sins. The following division will greatly assist in an analytical study of this chapter. Ezekiel 20:1-9 describe the nation's sins in Egypt. Ezekiel 20:10-17 give the history of the first generation which came out of Egypt. It is a wonderful condensed rehearsal of all they were and what the Lord had done for them. The record of the second generation is contained in Ezekiel 20:18-26. This is followed by a description of their unfaithfulness and sins in the land (Ezekiel 20:27-32). Judgment then is announced and a future restoration promised. Ezekiel 20:40-44 are yet to be fulfilled. The fire of judgment to sweep over the south field (Judah) is announced in the final paragraph (Ezekiel 20:45-49).

Chapter 21

Judgment by the sword

Verses 1-17. The Lord unsheaths His sword

Verses 18-32. The sword of Nebuchadnezzar

Ezekiel 21:1-32. A solemn message is given to the prophet: "Behold I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked." It was to be a widespread judgment, against all flesh. Ezekiel was commanded to sigh with bitterness before their eyes and was to tell them the cause of his grief (Ezekiel 21:1-7). The sharpening of the sword of judgment is given in Ezekiel 21:8-17. It was hanging over their heads, ready to strike at any moment. The question is asked, "Should we then make mirth?" is this the time of mirth, worldly pleasures and enjoyment? Not for the faithful in Israel. Nor is the present solemn time a time of mirth for those who know the signs of the times and what God has revealed concerning things to come.

The king of Babylon and his divination is vividly pictured in Ezekiel 21:18-24. The Babylonians used different kinds of enchantments, etc., to ascertain what they should do. The king stands at the cross-roads. Shall he go to Rabbath or against Jerusalem? He used arrows and put on one the name of "Rabbath" of the Ammonites; on the other "Jerusalem." Then he shook them to and fro (correct rendering--"he made his arrows bright"). In Ezekiel 21:22, we see the result of this divination. He has in his hands the arrow with "Jerusalem" on it.

The wicked prince and the Coming One are seen in Ezekiel 21:25-27. Here Christ and Antichrist are contrasted. There can be no question that Zedekiah is first of all in view as the profane wicked prince of Israel. But the prophecy looks far beyond Zedekiah. It is the coming wicked prince, the one who comes in his own name, the final Antichrist, the false messiah, or, as he is also called in Revelation, the false prophet. That Ezekiel 21:25 refers to the time of the end, is seen by the words, “in the time of the iniquity of the end” (correct translation). The same phrase appears in Daniel 11:35-39, “the time of the end,” and the person described in that passage is the Antichrist, the wicked prince. It is the time of the future great tribulation “when the transgressors are come to the full” Daniel 8:23. This false Christ will claim priestly and kingly honors. He is the beast out of the earth, Revelation 13:1-18) having two horns like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. The two horns represent the priesthood and the kingship he assumes. And this, we learn from Ezekiel 21:26, is the character of the wicked prince of Israel of whom Ezekiel speaks. Again, we must correct the faulty translation of the Authorized Version: “Remove the mitre and take off the crown”; the word “diadem” is mitre, the head-dress of the high-priest Exodus 28:4. He wears the mitre of the priest and the crown of the king. He is Satan’s final counterfeit (like the pope) of the Priest-King. In Ezekiel 21:27, the overturning times are mentioned. Thrice it is stated, “I will overturn.” Even so will it be at the time of the end until He comes whose right it is.

Ezekiel 21:28-32 give the announcement of judgment upon the Ammonites.

Chapter 22

Jerusalem’s indictment

Verses 1-16. Jerusalem’s violence and abomination

Verses 17-31. The smelting furnace of God’s wrath

Verses 1-31

Ezekiel 22:1-31; Ezekiel 23:1-49. Before the sharpened sword of justice and retribution does its dreadful work, the Lord uncovers the guilt and vileness of the city and lays bare the corruption of her prophets, priests, and princes, as well as of the people. The violence and abomination of Jerusalem are revealed in Ezekiel 22:1-16; the smelting furnace in Ezekiel 22:17-23 is the symbol of Jehovah’s fiery indignation against Jerusalem and its inhabitants. The corruption of the prophets, priests, and princes is fully uncovered in the closing section of chapter 22 (Ezekiel 22:23-31).



Assyrian warrior

Chapter 23

Oholah and Oholibah

Verses 1-4. The allegory

Verses 5-49. The meaning

Verses 1-49

In Ezekiel 23:1-49 Samaria and Jerusalem are called two sisters, Aholah and Aholibah, in their ungodly relation with Assyria and Chaldea. Aholah means “her tent.” Aholibah, “my tent is in her.” The latter denotes the fact that the true sanctuary was in Judah. The sins and vileness of both are portrayed throughout this long chapter, as well as the deserved punishment.

Chapter 24

The cooking pot and the end

Verses 1-14. The allegory of the pot

Verses 15-27. Death of Ezekiel’s wife

Verses 1-27

Ezekiel 24:1-27. The exact date is given by the prophet. It was the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year. What happened also on that date we find recorded in 2 Kings 25:1 : “And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came, he and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.” How did Ezekiel know about all this? It was the Lord who gave him this information and led him to record the date. This is the statement of the second verse: “Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this selfsame day, the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.” What does higher criticism have to say to this? We quote a recent commentator: “These verses (2) force on us in the clearest fashion the dilemma--either Ezekiel was a deliberate deceiver or he was possessed of some kind of a second sight!” What about divine revelation? This the “learned” men refuse to think even possible. The boiling pot announced is the symbol of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 24:15-18 announce the death of Ezekiel’s wife, and he is commanded not to mourn or weep; all the customary signs of grief are forbidden him. While

he faithfully delivered the message in the morning, even his wife was taken from his side. Death had dissolved the marriage union and taken from the prophet the beloved wife. Even so the relationship between Jehovah and Jerusalem was now completely to be severed. The question of the people and the answer is found in Ezekiel 24:19-27. Read Ezekiel 24:26-27 and compare with Ezekiel 33:21-22.

Chapter 25

Prophecies against various nations

Verses 1-14. Predictions against Ammon, Moab and Edom

Verses 15-17. Predictions against Philistia

Chapters 25-32

Predictions of Judgments Against the Nations

- 1. Prophecies concerning Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines (Ezekiel 25:1-17)*
- 2. Concerning Tyrus (Ezekiel 26:1-21)*
- 3. The glory of Tyrus and Her Fall (Ezekiel 27:1-36)*
- 4. The prince of Tyrus (Ezekiel 28:1-26)*
- 5. Concerning Egypt (Ezekiel 29:1-21; Ezekiel 30:1-26)*
- 6. Pharaoh's greatness and his overthrow (Ezekiel 31:1-18)*
- 7. Lamentations and the great funeral dirge (Ezekiel 32:1-32)*

Ezekiel 25:1-17. The eight chapters as analyzed above are on prophecies concerning nations which were in touch with Israel. These predictions concern seven nations, and these are divided into four and three. The first four were the immediate neighbours of Israel. The first message concerns the Ammonites (Ezekiel 25:1-7). Both Ammon and Moab had a racial connection with Israel and were the incestuous offspring of Lot Genesis 19:37-38. They were in constant conflict with Israel. Their evil character is revealed in this message. Moab is mentioned next (Ezekiel 25:8-11). We give several passages which may be consulted about Moab and the character of the people Jeremiah 48:29; Isaiah 16:6. There is promised for both Ammon and Moab a national restoration in the

latter days, that is, when the Lord comes Jeremiah 48:47; Jeremiah 49:6. Let us remember that these nations were proud in the extreme. And these judgments upon proud, self-exalting, God-forgetting nations, are not confined to the past. They will be repeated in the future when He will judge the nations.

Ezekiel 25:12-14 concern Edom. The descendants of Esau, Edom, were closer to Israel than Ammon and Moab. Edom's deeds were more prominently against the people of God, more wicked and defiant, than the others. Israel was especially commanded not to abhor an Edomite Deuteronomy 23:7. Amos shows the sin of Edom Amos 1:11. So does Obadiah (Obadiah 1:3-4). The cruel Herods, the types of the man of sin, were Edomites. The judgment upon Edom is to be executed by Israel. This is to take place in a future day. (See Obadiah 1:17-21 and Amos 9:11-12.) The final paragraph is concerning the Philistines (Ezekiel 25:15-17). The Philistines dwelt on a narrow strip on the seashore and were the long continued enemies of the people Israel. Jeremiah speaks of them (chapter 47). See also Amos 1:6-9, Joel 3:4; Isaiah 14:29-32. The vengeance of the Lord fell upon the coast of Palestina, the Philistines, and they experienced the fury of the Lord. He dealt with them who had corrupted His people. And so God will deal in due time with all His enemies.

Chapter 26

Prophecy of Tyre's destruction

Verses 1-6. Judgment announced

Verses 7-21 Judgment executed

Verses 1-21

Ezekiel 26:1-21. A lengthy prophecy concerning Tyrus is found in this and in the chapters which follow. These great predictions have found a startling fulfilment. History confirms all that Ezekiel spoke should come to pass. In Ezekiel 26:1-14 we have the overthrow of the powerful city predicted.

The city of Tyrus (which means rock) was partly built upon an island off the mainland in the Mediterranean Sea. It was an ancient Phoenician city and is mentioned in Scripture for the first time in Joshua 19:29, where it is called "the strong city." It had a wonderful commerce, a description of which in its variety, we find in the twenty-seventh chapter. It was inhabited by seafaring men, and the prophet Isaiah describes this wealthy and influential city as "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth" Isaiah 23:8. We read in the next chapter how Syria, Persia, Egypt, Spain,

Greece and every quarter of the ancient world laid their choicest and most precious things at the feet of Tyre, who sat enthroned on ivory, covered with blue and purple, from the isles of Elishah. Her beauty was perfect Ezekiel 27:11. During the reign of David and Solomon, Tyre came into great prominence, playing an important role in the commercial, political and religious history of Israel. Hiram, King of Tyrus, sent cedar trees to Jerusalem, as well as workmen, who built David a house 2 Samuel 5:11. How Tyrus aided in the construction of the temple and the palace under Solomon's reign, may be learned by consulting the following passages: 1 Kings 5:1-18; 1 Kings 7:13-51; 1 Chronicles 14:11, 2 Chronicles 2:3; 2 Chronicles 2:11. When the ships of Solomon sailed away to Ophir, "Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon, and they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon" 1 Kings 9:27-28). She sinned against Jerusalem and the people of God. Joel and Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah mention her and her well-deserved judgment Joel 3:4-21; Amos 1:9-15; Isaiah 23:1-18; Jeremiah 47:4.

In the third verse of our chapter, we read the divine announcement of Tyre's fate: "Behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causes its waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock." It was to become a place for the spreading of nets and a spoil to the nations. This great judgment was not all at once carried out. Nebuchadnezzar came first against her as predicted in Ezekiel 26:7-11. He besieged Tyre on the mainland and after thirteen years took the city; while that part of Tyrus which was built upon the island in the sea, protected by the fleet of Tyrus, escaped. Then came for her seventy years when she was forgotten, as predicted by Isaiah (Isaiah 23:15). After these years had passed Tyrus saw a startling revival. The island city became more powerful and wicked than before; "she committed fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" Isaiah 23:17. The continental Tyrus, however, remained in ruins.

Centuries passed and it seemed as if Ezekiel's prophecy concerning Tyre's complete overthrow would remain unfulfilled. It was about 240 years after when the literal fulfillment of this prophecy was accomplished. Alexander the Great came against the city built on the island. After seven months the city was taken by means of a mole, by which the forces of Alexander could enter the city. In constructing this mole, Alexander made use of the ruins of the old city. The stones, timber and the very dust of the destroyed city was laid into the sea to erect the causeway which accomplished the utter ruin of the wealthy city. And thus Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled. "And they shall lay thy stones and thy

timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.” The complete end of Tyrus had come. “And thou shalt be no more, though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again” (Ezekiel 26:21). So completely was the work done by Alexander, depositing the debris of the ruins of Tyrus on the mainland into the sea, that its exact site will remain undeterminable. And Alexander the Great fulfilled still another prophecy. Before he came on his mission, directed by God, to make an end of the proud and wicked city, Zechariah, the great post-exilic prophet, had once more announced the fate of Tyrus. “And Tyrus,” said the Lord through Zechariah, “did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the ruin of the streets.” This was after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the Tyrus on the mainland and she became the great island city. “Thus,” said Zechariah, “behold, the Lord will cast her out, and He will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire” Zechariah 9:3-17). Alexander did this: he laid proud Tyrus in ashes. What an evidence that all these words are divine!

The effect of the fall of Tyrus and a lamentation over that fall are revealed in Ezekiel 26:15-21. There is a description of the descent of Tyrus into the pit (Ezekiel 26:19-20). The last sentence of Ezekiel 26:20, “And I shall set glory in the land of the living,” means the coming glory of the earthly Zion, the glory in store for Israel.

Chapter 27

Lament over Tyre

Verses 1-24. Tyre symbolised as a ship

Verses 25-36. Destruction of the ship

Verses 1-36

Ezekiel 27:1-36. Ezekiel 27:1-25 give an interesting description of the world-wide commerce and glory of this proud world city. “Sic transit gloria mundi,” thus passeth the glory of the world! Of the proud and wicked mistress of the sea nothing but ruins remain and her very site is no longer known. What her past glory was is made known by the prophet, yet Ezekiel never had been to that city, nor did he have any knowledge of her grandeur, her great wealth and far reaching commerce. God revealed all unto him.

The description of her great commerce reminds us of that coming world-system as described in the last book of the Bible, the Revelation. Babylon the Great will be both an ecclesiastical and commercial world center. Her commerce is just

like the commerce of Tyrus Revelation 18:12-24). The fall of Tyrus is fully given in Ezekiel 27:26-30.

The description of Tyrus as a ship as given in the first part of this chapter is here maintained. Tyrus is to be shipwrecked. The east wind is Nebuchadnezzar, who came against the proud city to accomplish part of her ruin; and Alexander the Great, as we saw in our previous study, completed the work. A comparison with Revelation 18:1-24 will bring out the striking correspondence. When finally Babylon the Great falls, that coming religious-commercial world-system, with Rome as a centre her fall and desolation, will surely be greater than the fall of Tyrus. For this all is rapidly preparing.

Chapter 28

Lament over the king of Tyre

Verses 1-10. The king of Tyre

Verses 11-19. The spiritual power behind the Tyrian king

Verses 1-26

Ezekiel 28:1-26. The prince of Tyrus, or, as he is also called, the king, was, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, Ithobalus, known in the Phoenician annals as Ithobaal II. He was the consummation of the pride and wealth of Tyrus; the terrible pride of the city headed up in him. His heart was so lifted up that he claimed to be a god and that he occupied the very seat of God. He boasted of greater wisdom than the wisdom of Daniel. He is a type of the final Antichrist, the man of sin. Behind the wicked prince and king, there is seen another power, Satan.

Satan was the power behind the throne of the Tyrian king, as Satan is still the god of this age, who controls the kingdoms of the world. Inasmuch, then, as Tyrus is a type of the commercial glory of the world, its wealth and pride, foreshadowing the final great world-city or world-system, Babylon, the ruler of Tyrus, spoken of as prince, foreshadows the Antichrist; while as king, Satan himself stands behind him as the domineering power. The descriptions given of Satan as an unfallen being show that he was originally a marvelous being, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. From Jude's Epistle, we learn that even Michael still recognized in him the grandeur of his unfallen past, and did not bring a railing accusation against him (Jude 1:8-10). He was in Eden, the garden of God, and every precious stone was his covering. It is a description of Satan's original place and of his great beauty. Furthermore, he was the anointed cherub that

covereth; the Lord had set him to be this. As the anointed, divinely chosen cherub he held an exalted position in connection with the government of the throne of God. Everything shows that this majestic creature possessed a place of great dignity, being “upon the holy mountain of God,” walking up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, he was ever present and moving about in the fiery glory of a holy and righteous God. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till unrighteousness was found in thee.”

Verses 20-26. Judgment of Sidon

In **Ezekiel 28:20-26** the judgment upon Zidon, some twenty miles north of Tyrus, is predicted. For some years Zidon was even more prominent than Tyrus. She was burnt after a revolt against Artaxerxes Ochus in 351 B.C., but later rebuilt.

Chapter 29

Chapters 29-32. Judgment against Egypt

29:1-16. Against Pharaoh-Hophra

Verses 17-21. Conquest of Egypt

30:1-26. Egypt's doom.

31:1-18. Lament over Pharaoh as a cedar

32:1-32. Lament over Pharaoh as a lion

Verses 1-26

Ezekiel 29-30. First Egypt's desolation is announced (Ezekiel 29:1-12). The king of Egypt addressed in this prophecy was Pharaoh-Hophra, called in Greek, Apries. He was the grandson of Pharaoh-Necho, who defeated King Josiah at Meggido 2 Chronicles 35:20-27. King Zedekiah of Judah expected help and relief from Pharaoh-Hophra, when Jerusalem was besieged. The Egyptian army under Hophra advanced through Phoenicia and forced the Chaldeans to raise the siege of Jerusalem Jeremiah 37:5-21. But the relief was only temporary, for the Egyptian army had to retire. The prophet Jeremiah announced also the doom of Hophra, associating it with Zedekiah's doom: “Thus saith the LORD, Behold I will give Pharaoh-Hophra, King of Egypt, into the hands of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah, King of Judah, into

the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life” Jeremiah 44:30.

But have these predictions been fulfilled? Did Egypt pass through a period of forty years’ desolation and did a restoration take place after the forty years? Critics claim that these predictions were never literally fulfilled and that Nebuchadnezzar did not invade Egypt during the reign of Hophra. They point to the historical evidence that Amasis followed Hophra as King of Egypt, and under his reign Egypt was in a very flourishing condition. The historian, Herodotus, gives this information, and it is fully confirmed by Egyptian records on monuments. But did the prophet Ezekiel predict that Egypt should be invaded by Nebuchadnezzar during the reign of Pharaoh-Hophra? His predictions of disaster for Israel by trusting in Egypt had been used by the Assyrian officer in addressing Hezekiah: “Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, upon Egypt, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, unto all that trust on him” 2 Kings 18:21. And so it was. Egypt gave no help to Israel and only wounded them grievously, as a staff which breaks under the weight of him who leaneth upon it breaks and pierces the hand. Whenever God’s people turn to Egypt (the type of the world) for help, and form ungodly alliances, they do so to their own hurt and shame.

Ezekiel 29:13-16 predict a future restoration of Egypt. Isaiah also shows its future history, both in judgment and in blessing (chapter 19). Yet the prediction of Ezekiel that Egypt after the forty years should be restored and be the basest of all kingdoms and shall have no more rule, but be in a diminished condition, excludes the application of this prophecy to the coming millennium. Egypt had such a period of forty years’ devastation, though the exact history of it may not be known to us. Prophecy is not learned by historical events, but history is revealed in prophecy. We believe prophecies, not because history has measured up to them, but we believe them because they are the inerrant Word of God. After Egypt’s sorrowful forty years’ experience and dispersion, this proud country went into a steady decline, and the Word of God was literally fulfilled when it became the basest of kingdoms, so that Israel put confidence no longer in Egypt. After Nebuchadnezzar’s raid, Egypt declined and sank lower still under the Persians and the Ptolemies, until she became the granary of Rome. And this degradation has continued throughout the centuries of this age, so that Egypt is literally the basest of the kingdoms. That she will play her part in the future at the close of our age we learn from Daniel’s prophecy Daniel 11:36-45. Egypt will rise into prominence ere long in connection with the present-day world conflict.

Then follows another prediction, the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon (Ezekiel 29:12-21). This also was literally fulfilled. In chapter 30 we find first a prophecy as to the desolation of Egypt and her allies (Ezekiel 30:1-13).

The prophet's first utterance is concerning the day, "Howl ye! Alas for the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the Gentiles." What day is this? Other prophets mention the day of Jehovah as a day of judgment and wrath when the Lord will deal in His righteousness with the nations of the earth (Isaiah 2:1-22, Isaiah 13:6; Isaiah 13:9; Joel 1:15; Joel 2:11; Joel 2:11; Joel 3:14; Amos 5:18; Amos 5:20; Obadiah 1:1 :Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7; Zephaniah 1:14; Zechariah 14:11, etc). This day in its final meaning is the day on which the Lord Jesus Christ will be visibly revealed from heaven. It is mentioned in the New Testament in 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2 (where "day of Christ" should be rendered "day of the Lord") and 2 Peter 3:10. This day will bring "man's day" to a close and usher in a new age, when righteousness shall reign as grace reigns now. This day of coming judgment of all nations is seen also here in a prophetic perspective. All previous judgments of nations as announced by God's prophet's, nations which sinned against Israel the chosen people, foreshadow the one great day, when the times of the Gentiles end in the revealed manner Daniel 2:34, Daniel 7:10-28). What came upon Egypt in the past through divine judgment will happen to the Gentile nations in the future at the close of our age, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12). Ever since the times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar the divinely appointed head Jeremiah 27:4-22), this day of the Lord has been drawing near, till now, with the stupendous present-day events, we can see this day rapidly approaching.

Two weeks after the lamentations over Pharaoh, the prophet uttered this solemn and most impressive elegy over the multitude of Egypt and the heathen nations who have gone into sheol. It has been called a weird Dantesque funeral march over the whole heathen world; but it is more than that. We look here into sheol and see the nations gathered there, stripped of their glory, in deepest abasement and shame. Their bodies are in the pit, the grave, and their souls in sheol, the unseen regions. God's patience was exhausted with them, the measure of their wickedness became full; then judgments swept them off the earth and they passed away and descended into sheol. And what irony there is connected with it! "Whom does thou surpass in beauty? Go down and be thou laid with the uncircumcised." And as the king came there with his multitudes, whom did they find there? Asshur, that is Assyria, is mentioned first: "Asshur is there and all

her company.” She was a cruel, pitiless, destructive power, and now she, who once caused “terror in the land of the living,” is helpless, with all her power gone in the unseen world. Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, the princes of the North, and the Zidonians are named as being in existence there. Once great powers, but now cut off, they lie with the uncircumcised in weakness and disgrace. While in Ezekiel 31:16 the dead and gone nations were comforted over Pharaoh who descended into sheol; in this passage Pharaoh, who sees these nations, now is himself comforted as he discovers his former enemies there.

A similar statement about sheol as a place of departed nations, who are nevertheless conscious, is found in the book of Isaiah. There the king of Babylon is seen in his descent into sheol. “Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, all the chieftains of the earth, it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomps are brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols, the worm is spread under thee, and the worms over thee?” Isaiah 14:9-32. Solemn words these are behind which stands the undeniable truth of a conscious and eternal existence of the human race. But only the New Testament Scriptures give the full light upon the future state.

The destruction of the principal cities of Egypt is announced in Ezekiel 30:13-19. All has been literally fulfilled. Noph is Memphis, the seat of the worship of Ptah and Apis. The city “No” is Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt, called by the Greeks “Diospolis,” the city of Jupiter. Her ruins bear witness of the past, indescribable splendor. The great temple of Carnac stood there. The other places mentioned are Sin, which is Pelusium, now completely buried in sand. Aven is Heliopolis, the center once of sun-worship; Pi-beseth is Bubastis, where the sacred cats were mummified, likewise a desolation now. Tehaphnehes or Daphnis also passed through judgment. What a remarkable fulfillment of what the Lord had announced through His prophet! May we here be reminded in our solemn times that the same omniscient Lord, who knows the end from the beginning, has spoken concerning this age, now closing in its predicted apostasy. Nations today steeped in bloodshed; nations filled with covetousness and hatred; an apostate professing Christendom and the indifferent masses have written over against them the judgment-wrath of the coming king. And He who fulfilled the words spoken through Ezekiel will also fulfill every other prediction uttered by His holy prophets and apostles.

The chapter closes with a prophetic description of the work of King Nebuchadnezzar, whom God used to execute His righteous judgments.

Chapter 30

Chapter 31

Verses 1-32

Ezekiel 31:1-18. Pharaoh's greatness is described in the first part of the chapter (Ezekiel 31:1-9). He is compared to the Assyrian, once so powerful and proud. The fall and desolation of the proud monarch under the picture of a tree follows in Ezekiel 31:10-14. The overthrow of Egypt and the resulting consternation among the nations is predicted in the last section of this chapter (Ezekiel 31:15-18).

Ezekiel 32:1-32. The lamentation over Pharaoh is contained in Ezekiel 32:1-10, followed by the final announcement of the sword of the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, in Ezekiel 32:11-16. The most interesting part in this last chapter of these great predictions of national judgments is the funeral dirge and the unveiling of the unseen world (Ezekiel 32:17-32).

Chapter 33-34

Verses 1-33

II. PREDICTIONS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM (33-48)

A. The Watchman, the False Shepherds, and the True Shepherd

- 1. The renewed call of Ezekiel as watchman ([Ezekiel 33:1-20](#))*
- 2. Ezekiel's mouth opened after Jerusalem's fall is announced ([Ezekiel 33:21-33](#))*
- 3. Message against the shepherds of Israel ([Ezekiel 34:1-19](#))*
- 4. The True Shepherd and restoration promised ([Ezekiel 34:20-26](#))*

33. Ezekiel's responsibility as watchman

Verses 1-20. A watchman and his responsibility

Ezekiel 33:1-20. The commission of Ezekiel as watchman corresponds to the same call in Ezekiel 3:16-21. In Ezekiel 33:10-20 the prophet announces certain principles of divine justice.

The exiles knew that the just wrath of God rested upon them as a nation and that their sins were unforgiven. Therefore they asked, "If our transgressions and sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" They also accused the Lord of inconsistency by saying, "the way of the Lord is not equal" (Ezekiel 34:20; see also Ezekiel 18:25; Ezekiel 18:29). The answer Jehovah sends them makes known the principles on which He will deal with them individually as a just God. "O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways." Judgment rested upon them as a nation, but the individual still could turn to the Lord in repentance. What a wonderful declaration it is which is recorded in Ezekiel 34:11! "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" What compassion and mercy! As it was a day of judgment which had come upon them, true repentance was the needed thing. A past righteousness could not shield them from the judgment if sin had been committed. "As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness." The wicked confessing and forsaking his sin would find mercy and forgiveness, while those who were impenitent would surely die and not live. "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." And this gracious promise was given in anticipation of the work of the cross, the redemption by the blood of Christ, by which God's righteousness is declared in passing thus over sins of Old Testament believers who turned to God Romans 3:25. The principles of divine justice are summed up in Ezekiel 33:18 and Ezekiel 33:19 : "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby." Needless to say, all this must be viewed as under the law-covenant. But their complaint that the way of the Lord is not equal was wrong, it was their way which was not equal. They were to be judged each according to what he had done.

News of Jerusalem's fall

Ezekiel 33:21-33. In Ezekiel 24:27, the promise had been given to Ezekiel that when the one who escaped from Jerusalem when it fell, arrived, the prophet

should no longer be dumb. This dumbness evidently does not mean that he was continually silent, without uttering a word, for he prophesied what is written in chapters 25-32. He was to be dumb concerning Israel; the intervening chapters, before the messenger came, concern other nations. And now that promised messenger arrived and his mouth was opened again to prophesy about Israel. The first message is one of rebuke, describing their condition.

Chapter 34

False shepherd and the true

Verses 1-19. Indictment of the faithless shepherds

Ezekiel 34:1-19. The shepherds of Israel were the kings and princes and all who had authority over them. The prophet Jeremiah had received a similar message Jeremiah 23:1-22. These shepherds of Israel were responsible for the deplorable condition of the flock. Utterly selfish, they cared not for the sheep of His pasture; they feared not God nor did they have a heart for God's people. The flock was scattered and spoiled.

Such was the sad condition of the people Israel. And when the Lord Jesus appeared in their midst to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He found them as sheep without a shepherd, and He had compassion upon them Mark 6:34. But they rejected Him and the Shepherd was smitten. Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled: "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the LORD of hosts. Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones" Zechariah 13:7. The false shepherds, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were a curse to the people, and the leaders were against the Shepherd. They delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles. And now for nearly 2,000 years the sheep have been scattered and peeled, wandering among the nations of the earth Luke 21:24. What is their hope and coming blessing we learn from this great prophecy.

(What is said in this chapter of the false shepherds who ill-treated the flock of God, His ancient people, may also be applied to the false shepherds, the hirelings in the professing church. See Acts 20:28-35 and 1 Peter 5:2-3.)

In Ezekiel 34:7-10, judgment is pronounced upon these false shepherds, and after that the Lord announces the deliverance of His flock (Ezekiel 34:11-19).

"Behold, I myself, even I, will search for My sheep and will seek them out." Jehovah arises in behalf of His scattered sheep. He will Himself exercise the

office of a true shepherd, seeking out His flock. The cloudy and dark day (the times of the Gentiles) is gone and another morning breaks, the morning for which His people have waited so long. What He will do at this time for His scattered sheep is now fully proclaimed. “I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie down in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord.” And all this has not yet come to pass. Some apply these words to the restoration of a remnant from the Babylonian captivity and see no future fulfillment of these promises. It is evident that the returning remnant did not possess these blessings. Others make a spiritual application and claim that it means the Church and the blessing which Gentiles will receive as the sheep of Christ. This is the common path which most commentators follow. It needs no lengthy refutation, for neither Ezekiel, nor the other prophets know anything of the Church and the “other sheep,” Gentiles saved by grace and with believing Jews constituting the one flock (John 10:16; Ephesians 3:1-21). This is unrevealed in the Old Testament. These gracious words of promise have not yet been fulfilled, nor will they be fulfilled as long as the Church, the body of Christ, is being gathered out from all nations. All must wait till God’s purpose in this age is accomplished. When the Church is complete as to its elect number, when the Lord has come for His saints and the true Church has passed from earth into glory, then will the Lord turn in mercy to His people Israel and these promises given by Ezekiel will be fulfilled.

Verses 20-31. Restoration of Israel under Messiah, the true shepherd

Ezekiel 34:20-26. Some have applied this to Zerubbabel, the head of Judah at the return from, the Babylonish captivity; this is done by those who deny a future restoration of Israel. Others take these words in a strictly literal sense and teach that David the King will become the head of the nation once more, and raised, from the dead, will be the one shepherd over His people. It is not David, but He who is according to the flesh the Son of David and David’s Lord as well. The one Shepherd can only be the Messiah. Numerous passages show that David’s name is used in a typical sense. Jeremiah announced, “They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jeremiah 30:9). Here David stands typically for Christ, the Messiah of Israel, for He is raised up unto them when Jacob’s trouble is ended (Ezekiel 34:1-7). Of Him Jeremiah speaks more fully in Ezekiel 23:5-6 : “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In

His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” The two, Judah and Israel, will be reunited by the one Shepherd. The Messiah of Israel is also mentioned by Hosea as David: “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God and David their King, and shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days” Hosea 3:5. Isaiah speaks of the sure mercies of David, and adds, “Behold I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader (prince) and commander to the people.” It is therefore not David, raised from the dead, but the Prince of Peace, who was here once to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel and who comes again to save the remnant of His people Israel and to receive the Throne of David Isaiah 9:6-21.

When the Lord is doing all that is promised here and the remnant has accepted the long rejected Messiah-King, a covenant of peace and blessing will follow. “And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. Peace will come to the land and to the whole earth with His coming. The evil beasts, the Gentile world powers Daniel 7:1-28 will no longer devastate the land. All will be peace and safety, so that they can sleep peacefully in the woods. “There shall be showers of blessing” (Ezekiel 34:26). How often a hymn is sung based upon this promise:

There shall be showers of blessing, This is the promise of love.

But how few who sing it know that the promise belongs first of all to Israel. When the Lord comes, the showers of blessing will be poured forth upon His people and upon all nations. It will be “the times of refreshing” Acts 3:19.

Ezekiel 34:27 and **Ezekiel 34:28** give a brief description of the millennial kingdom. Groaning creation will then be delivered and the wild beasts will have their natures changed (compare Ezekiel 34:28 with Isaiah 11:6-9 and Romans 8:19-22. There is no need to speculate on the meaning of “the plant of renown,” which will be raised up. It is none other than He, who, as to His humiliation, is described as “a tender plant” and “as a root out of a dry ground” Isaiah 53:2. But now He appears in all His glory, and becomes the plant of renown. Their shame and suffering will then be over. He will be their God and they will be His people.



Should no shepherds take care of the flock? (Ezekiel 34:2)

Chapter 35

The judgment of Edom

Chapters 35-36

Judgment Announced and Israel's Final Restoration Promised

1. The message against Mount Seir and Idumea (Ezekiel 35:1-15)

Verses 1-10. Edom's evil design

Verses 11-15. Edom's ruin

2. The message of comfort to Israel (Ezekiel 36:1-38)

Ezekiel 35:1-15. This is another judgment message, which is closely related to the coming restoration of Israel. When the Lord is merciful to His people and bestows upon them the promised blessings, He will also deal with their enemies in judgment. Edom was the most bitter enemy of Israel, their blood-relation. The judgment threatened here was executed upon Edom; but it has a prophetic meaning of the judgment which is in store for the enemies of God's people when the times of the Gentiles end and God arises in behalf of His suffering and persecuted people.

Then, in Ezekiel 35:14-15, we hear of the time of rejoicing which will come for His people when their enemies are judged Deuteronomy 32:43.

Chapter 36

Restoration to the land

Verses 1-7. Future judgment of Israel's enemies

Verses 8-38. Promised return to the land

Verses 1-38

Ezekiel 36:1-38. With this chapter the great prophetic utterances of Ezekiel begin concerning the future restoration and blessing of Israel. From here on to the end of the book, all is still unfulfilled, nor can it be fulfilled until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again and is enthroned as King. The first seven verses (Ezekiel 36:1-7) announce once more the future judgment of Israel's enemies. Then comes the promised return to the land Ezekiel 36:8-15. The mountains of Israel, barren so long, shall be inhabited again. Israel's past sins and chastisement are reviewed in Ezekiel 36:16-20, and then comes that great message of restoration and blessing through grace in that day when their once rejected King returns and they bow before Him. The characteristic words in Ezekiel 36:23-28 are the words "I will do." It is the word of sovereign grace. Eighteen times Jehovah says what He will do. They are the "I wills" of Israel's hope and coming glory.

He will gather them from among the nations and all countries and bring them back to their own land. Only a superficial expositor can speak of a fulfillment when they returned from Babylon. But even if this were so, though it is not, the verses which follow have never been fulfilled in the past. The cleansing of the nation is next promised: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean." It refers us to the water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer, which was sprinkled with a hyssop on the unclean, typifying the precious blood of Christ in its cleansing power Hebrews 9:13-28; Hebrews 10:22. Thus, when the people of

Israel believe on Him and look upon Him whom they pierced Zechariah 12:10, they will be cleansed. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” Zechariah 13:1. Then follows the promise of the new birth of Israel. “A new heart will I also give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” The stony heart is to be taken away and they will receive a heart of flesh. Our Lord had this passage in mind when He talked with Nicodemus about the new birth. Nicodemus, the teacher in Israel, was ignorant of the fact that this new birth for Israel is necessary in order to be in that coming kingdom and to receive its blessings. Therefore the Lord said to him, “If I have told you earthly things (about Israel and the new birth as the way into the kingdom) and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” (the heavenly blessings which follow His sacrificial death).

Chapter 37

Chapters 37-48

The Future Blessings of Israel, the Nation Regathered,

Their Enemies Overthrown, the Millennial Temple, and the Division of the Land

1. *The vision of the dry bones and Judah and Israel reunited (Ezekiel 37:1-28)*

Verses 1-14. Scope of the vision

Verses 15-28. The extent of Israel’s restoration

2. *Gog and Magog and their destruction (Ezekiel 38:1-23; Ezekiel 39:1-29)*
3. *The millennial temple, its worship, and the division of the land (Ezekiel 40:1-49; Ezekiel 41:1-26; Ezekiel 42:1-20; Ezekiel 43:1-27; Ezekiel 44:1-31; Ezekiel 45:1-25; Ezekiel 46:1-24; Ezekiel 47:1-23; Ezekiel 48:1-35)*

Ezekiel 37:1-28. The future restoration of Israel, both nationally and spiritually, is now shown to the prophet in a vision. What these dry bones represent and what their revival mean, is explained by the Lord Himself. It may be used in application in different ways, to illustrate certain truths, but the true and only interpretation is the one which is given by the Lord in Ezekiel 37:11-14. But there is an erroneous interpretation of a serious nature which is widely taught and believed among many Christians. Because “graves” are mentioned, beside

the dry bones and their resurrection, it is being taught that the vision means physical resurrection. Systems, like Millennial Dawnism, alias International Bible Student Association and others, which teach the so-called larger hope, a second chance for the impenitent dead, the restitution of the lost, teach that all the Israelites who have died in their sins will be brought out of their graves and then be saved. They use this vision to confirm this invention. An advocate of this theory declared that all the Christ-hating Pharisees and Sadducees who lived when our Lord was on earth would be raised up when He comes and then believe on Him. Matthew 23:39 was used by him as an argument. These restitution teachers also teach that inasmuch as Israel will have a second chance when they are raised from the dead, the Gentile dead will share also in the same. It needs no argument to refute this. The Word of God teaches a twofold resurrection: A first resurrection and a second resurrection, a resurrection of the just and a resurrection of the unjust John 5:28-47. According to the above theory, there would have to be a third resurrection, a resurrection for a second chance and ultimate salvation of those who died in their sins. Of such a resurrection the Bible knows nothing.

In this vision of the dry bones, physical resurrection is used as a type of the national restoration of Israel. It is used in the same way in Daniel 12:2. In that passage the sleep in the dust of the earth is symbolical of their national condition. And when their national sleep ends there will be an awakening. When we read here in Ezekiel of graves, it must not be taken to mean literal graves; the graves are symbolical of the nation as being buried among the Gentiles. If these dry bones meant the physical dead of the nation, how could it be explained that they speak and say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost?" The same figure of speech is used in the New Testament. Of the prodigal it is said, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again" Luke 15:24. Yet he was not physically dead, nor was he made alive physically. Therefore, this vision has nothing whatever to do with a physical resurrection. The late Dr. Bullinger, whose erroneous suggestions have led astray some, also taught that the vision of the dry bones includes resurrection as well as restoration.

Equally bad is that spiritualizing method which takes a vision like this, as well as the hundreds of promises of a coming restoration, and applies it all to the Church, ignoring totally the claims of Israel and their promised future of glory. This is the general trend of commentators.

Ezekiel 37:15-28 predict the reunion of Judah and Israel with one king over them. That King is our Lord. Then the angelic message given to the Virgin when the coming incarnation was announced will be fulfilled: "The Lord God shall

give unto Him the throne of His Father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His Kingdom there shall be no end” Luke 1:32-80).

Chapter 38-39

Destruction of Israel’s last foes

38:1-6. The great last-day northern confederacy

38:7-23. Attack on Israel

39:1-24. Overthrow of Gog

39:25-29. Vision of restored and converted Israel

Ezekiel 38:1-23; Ezekiel 39:1-29. There will be at that time of restoration a great and final invasion of the land of Israel. Gog and Magog will invade the land “that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people.” The invaders come “against the mountains of Israel which have always been waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them.” In Ezekiel 38:11, the evil purpose of the invader is made known. From all this we learn that the invasion takes place at the time when the Lord has brought back His people and resumed His relationship with the remnant of Israel.

The invasion will happen some time after the beastly empire with its beast head, the revived Roman empire, in its final ten kingdom form and the clay, with the little horn as leader Daniel 7:1-28; Revelation 13:1-18 and the false prophet, the personal Antichrist Revelation 13:11, etc. have been dealt with in judgment Revelation 19:19-21. The stone out of heaven has then fallen upon the feet of the great dream image of Nebuchadnezzar; and as far as the western confederated world power is concerned, it is now ended. But other nations gather now for an assault. It is a northern confederacy which sweeps southward to invade the land, as Antiochus Epiphanes did in the past, as well as the Assyrian in the days of Isaiah. These final invading hosts, under the leadership of a powerful king, come like a storm, and like a cloud to cover the land.

But who are they?

The leader is the prince of Rosh (not as the Authorized Version has it “the chief prince”) of Meshech and Tubal. This prince is the head of the confederacy and with him allied are Persia, Cush, Phut, Gomer and Togormah. They come out of the north, or, as it is in Hebrew, “out of the uttermost north” (Ezekiel 38:15).

Inasmuch as the Prince of Rosh is addressed in Ezekiel 38:3 as Gog, we take it that Gog is the name given to this prince and leader of these nations. His dwelling place is in the land of Magog. We know from Genesis 10:2, that Magog was the second son of Japheth. Gomer, Tubal and Meshech were also sons of Japheth; Togormah was a grandson of Japheth, being the third son of Gomer. Magog's land was located in what is called today the Caucasus and the adjoining steppes. And the three, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal were called by the ancients Scythians. They roamed as nomads in the country around and north of the Black and the Caspian Seas, and were known as the wildest barbarians. We learn from this that the invading forces, which fall into Israel's land in the future, when Israel has been regathered, come from a territory north of Palestine which today is in the hands of Russia. And here we call attention to the prince, this northern leader, or king, who is the head of all these nations. He is the prince of Rosh. Careful research has established the fact that the progenitor of Rosh was Tiraz Genesis 10:22, and that Rosh is Russia. All students of prophecy are agreed that this is the correct meaning of Rosh. The prince of Rosh, means, therefore, the prince or king of the Russian empire. But he also is in control of Meshech and Tubal, which are reproduced in the modern Moscow and Tobolsk. Russia, we may well conclude from this, will furnish the man who will lead this confederacy of nations. We write this at a time when Russia is passing through horrors upon horrors. A revolution changed the autocratic government into a democracy, and that gave way to anarchy, produced by satanic powers. From what is written in this chapter, we learn that Russia will ultimately return to the old regime, and will once more become a monarchy to fulfill her final destiny as made known in this sublime prophecy. Well known it is that Russia has been in the past the most pronounced and bitterest enemy of the Jewish people. What she passes through today is but a fulfillment of what the Lord has spoken: "I will curse them that curse thee." Today, the Jews in Russia may have bright hopes of getting their rights and complete emancipation at last. For a time this may come to pass, but ultimately Russia will turn against them; and, as Pharaoh did, when Israel had left his domain, so this coming king of the north, the prince of Rosh, when Israel is back in the land, will turn against them.

With him come the other nations. Persia, which is even now in part occupied by Russia, will finally be a vassal to this prince of Rosh. Ethiopia and Phut are also in this confederacy. There also is Gomer and all its bands. Gomer, says Delitzsch, "is most probably the tribe of the Cimmerians, who dwell, according to Herodotus, on the Maeotis, in the Taurian Chersonesus, and from whom are descended the Curmi or Cymry in Wales and Britain, whose relation to the Germanic Cimbri is still in obscurity." Valuable information is given in the Talmud; Gomer is there stated to be the Germani, the Germans. That the descendants of the Gomer moved northward and established themselves in parts

of Germany seems to be an established fact. All this is of much interest. Germany did not belong to the Roman empire, at least the greater part of Germany was never conquered by Rome. She will therefore not participate in the Western confederacy. Will she then become united to Russia and march under the prince of Rosh into the land of Israel? We cannot be sure about all these things. This, however, we know, that a powerful confederacy of nations, under the leadership of the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, will come up against Immanuel's land, when Israel has been restored and dwells safely.

The judgment and destruction of the invading hosts are vividly pictured in the thirty-fourth to thirty-ninth chapters as well as their burial. Compare Ezekiel 39:17-20 with Revelation 19:17-18; though the great supper in Revelation and Jehovah's sacrifice here in Ezekiel are not identical, yet both are judgments. The final paragraphs of this chapter (Ezekiel 39:21-29) give the promise of glory.

The last verse contains an important statement. The Lord says that He hides His face no more from them. This in itself shows that all this is not yet here; for still He hides His face from them. The hiding of His face from them will be no more when His Spirit is poured upon them. "I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD." There comes then a time when the house of Israel, the literal descendants of Abraham, will receive an outpouring of the Spirit of God. Such is also the message of Joel, in which restoration and spiritual blessing, through the outpouring of the Spirit are blended together (Joel 2:1-32). We call attention to another passage which should be linked with the statement in this chapter. Isaiah 32:13-20 is a very striking prophecy. There is an announcement made first of all concerning the judgment which is to fall upon Israel's land. "Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city," etc. But this is not to last forever. An "until" follows. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." This is the same future outpouring of the Spirit of God. Up to now it has not been. The Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost came to form the body of Christ; but this outpouring in connection with Israel has another significance.

Chapter 40

Description of the temple

Verses 1-4. The introduction

Verses 5-49. The vision of the temple

Chapters 40-48. The final nine chapters of this book form the climax of the great prophecies of Ezekiel; they belong to the most difficult in the entire prophetic Word. Once more the hand of the Lord rests upon the seer and in the visions of God he is brought into the land of Israel. In the very beginning of this grand finale we learn therefore that the visions concern the land of Israel. Let us remember, that after the fall of Jerusalem had been announced to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 33:21), his prophetic utterances and visions concern the future when Israel is to be regathered and restored to the land. The previous two chapters dealt with the last invasion of the land of Israel and the complete overthrow of Gog and its hordes. The vision contained in this last section follows after Israel's final deliverance. So much is clear as to the time when the prophecies of these eight chapters will be accomplished. They have not been fulfilled in the past, certainly not in the remnant which returned under Zerubbabel and Ezra. Nor have these prophecies been fulfilled since then. All is future. Only when the Lord has gathered Judah and Israel, when He has established His glorious Kingdom in their midst and delivered His people and the land from the last invader, will this last vision of Ezekiel become history.

This disposes then at once of the different modes of interpretation employed by so many expositors of this book. These are the following:

1. The theory of interpretation which looks upon the vision of these chapters as fulfilled in the return of the remnant from Babylon. One of the expositors who follows this line stated that these visions are "an ideal representation of the Jewish state about to be restored after the captivity." It does not need much argument to show that this mode of interpretation is erroneous. The temple which the remnant built does in no way whatever correspond with the magnificent structure which Ezekiel beheld in his vision. The fact is, if this temple is a literal building (as it assuredly is) it has never yet been erected. Furthermore, it is distinctly stated that the glory of the Lord returned to the temple and made His dwelling place there, the same glory which Ezekiel had seen departing from the temple and from Jerusalem. But the glory did not return to the second temple. No glory cloud filled that house. And furthermore no high priest is mentioned in the worship of the temple Ezekiel describes, but the Jews

after their return from Babylon had high priests again. Nor can the stream of healing waters flowing from the temple as seen by Ezekiel be in any way applied to the restoration from the Babylonian captivity. Expositors who follow this mode of interpretation claim that all has been fulfilled and that there is nothing in store for Israel in the future, It is the most superficial method and totally wrong.

2. Another interpretation claims that the whole vision sprang from the imagination of the prophet. That it is all an ideal description of something which the expositor himself is unable to define. This mode of interpretation needs no further mention and answer.

3. The third interpretation of these chapters is the allegorical, which spiritualizes everything, and claims that the Christian Church, its earthly glory and blessing, is symbolically described by the prophet. This is the weakest of all and yet the most accepted. But this theory gives no exposition of the text, is vague and abounds in fanciful applications, while the greater part of this vision is left unexplained even in its allegorical meaning, for it evidently has no such meaning at all.

(What strange applications have been made of this vision! We quote from The New Century Bible which says concerning this temple:

“Its details shed a light nowhere else vouchsafed to us upon the ideals of Hebrew art, influenced perhaps, by Babylonian masterpieces, yet entirely national and Puritan; and they embody in material form Ezekiel’s sober but intense conception of religion, as completely as the Gothic cathedrals translate into concrete and abiding stone and marble the soaring visions of medieval Christianity.”)

The true interpretation is the literal one which looks upon these chapters as a prophecy yet unfulfilled and to be fulfilled when Israel has been restored by the Shepherd and when His glory is once more manifested in the midst of His people. The great building seen in his prophetic vision will then come into existence and all will be accomplished.

But while we are sure of the strictly future fulfillment of this final vision, the many details which abound in these chapters can hardly be fully interpreted as to their meaning. Much is obscure. That all has a deeper meaning we do not doubt; and here and there we shall offer suggestions, but many things we shall have to pass over. Before we turn to the text and open up the contents of these chapters,

a telescopic view of the whole section is in order and will be helpful in our further studies.

As it will be impossible to give a detailed explanation of this future temple we give an analysis of these chapters. Our larger work on Ezekiel will be found helpful in a better understanding of this portion of this book.



View of Ezekiel's vision of the temple (impressions from an artist)

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE (40-48)

Chapter 40

1. The introduction (Ezekiel 40:1-4)

Verses 5-49. The vision of the temple

2. The gate toward the east (Ezekiel 40:5-16)

3. The outer court (Ezekiel 40:17-27)

4. The inner court (Ezekiel 40:28-37)

5. The tables for the offerings and the chambers for the inner court (Ezekiel 40:38-47)

6. The porch of the house (Ezekiel 40:48-49)

Chapter 41

The arrangement of the temple

Verses 1-14. The house itself

Verses 15-26. Interior details

1. The holy place (Ezekiel 41:1-2)

2. The most holy (Ezekiel 41:3-4)

3. The side chambers (Ezekiel 41:5-11)

4. The hinder buildings and the measurement (Ezekiel 41:12-14)

5. Description of the interior of the temple (Ezekiel 41:15-26)

Chapter 42

1. The priest's chambers in the inner court (Ezekiel 42:1-14)

2. The final measurements (Ezekiel 42:15-20)

Chapters 42-43. The purpose of Ezekiel's temple

42:1-20. To demonstrate God's holiness

Chapter 43

43:1-17. To provide a dwelling place for the divine glory

43:7. To provide a centre for the divine government

43:18-27. To perpetuate the memorial of sacrifice

II. THE TEMPLE WORSHIP (43-44)

1. The return of the glory of the Lord and filling the house (Ezekiel 43:1-9)

2. The address to the nation (Ezekiel 43:10-12)

3. The dimensions of the altar (Ezekiel 43:13-17)

4. The offerings to be bought (Ezekiel 43:18-27)

Chapters 44-46

Worship in the Kingdom Age

44:1-31. Concerning the priests and the prince

Chapter 44

1. The outward eastern gate for the prince (Ezekiel 44:1-3)

2. The charge concerning the strangers and the rebellious tribes (Ezekiel 44:4-14)

3. The charge concerning the priests, the sons of Zadok (Ezekiel 44:15-27)

4. The inheritance of the priests (Ezekiel 44:28-31)

Chapter 45

45:1-25. Portions of other groups

1. The portions of the priests, the Levites, of the whole house of Israel, and the prince (Ezekiel 45:1-8)

2. Concerning the prince (Ezekiel 45:9-17)

3. The feast of Passover and the feast of tabernacles (Ezekiel 45:18-25)

Chapter 46

46:1-46. The worship of the prince

46:19-24. A final description of places in the temple

1. The worship of the prince (Ezekiel 46:1-8)

2. Further instruction as to worship (Ezekiel 46:9-15)

3. Concerning the prince, his sons and his servants (Ezekiel 46:16-18)

4. A final description of places in the temple (Ezekiel 46:19-24)

Chapters 47-48

The millennial land

47:13-23. The boundaries of the land

Chapter 47

III. THE VISION CONCERNING THE LAND (47-48)

1. The waters of healing from the temple (Ezekiel 47:1-12)

2. Borders of the land (Ezekiel 47:13-21)

3. Concerning the stranger in the land (Ezekiel 47:22-23)

Chapter 48

48:1-29. The apportionment of the land

48:30-35. Jerusalem in the Kingdom Age

1. The portion of the seven tribes (Ezekiel 48:1-7)

2. The oblation for the sanctuary, for the city, and for the prince (Ezekiel 48:8-20)

3. The gates of the city and its new name (Ezekiel 48:30-35)

Without entering into the measurements, the architecture, and other features of this great temple, we point out a few things which are important. First, as to the contents of the interior of this temple. The words “silver and gold” are not mentioned once in Ezekiel 40:1-49; Ezekiel 41:1-26; Ezekiel 42:1-20; Ezekiel 43:1-27; Ezekiel 44:1-31; Ezekiel 45:1-25; Ezekiel 46:1-24; Ezekiel 47:1-23; Ezekiel 48:1-35. Silver typifies grace in redemption, being the ransom money. Gold typifies divine righteousness. Both are absent in the millennial temple, for what the silver and gold foreshadows is now realized in His redeemed earthly people. The heavenly Jerusalem has gold in it, but silver is not mentioned in the description of the city in Revelation 21:1-27.

The chief ornaments in this temple are cherubim and palm trees; they were along the wall of the temple. So it was in the temple of Solomon. “And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers within and without” 1 Kings 6:29.

A palm tree was between cherub and cherub. As stated in the previous chapter, palms are the emblems of victory and remind us of the feast of tabernacles. They were seen high above on the posts. Cherubim speak of the presence of the Lord, who enters this house and is worshipped here. But the cherubim here have only two faces and not four as in the opening vision of this book (Ezekiel 1:10-12). As often stated, these celestial beings tell out the Lord Jesus Christ in His personal glory. The lion, His kingly glory; the face of a man, His true humanity; the face of an ox, His servant character; and the face of an eagle, His heavenly origin and destiny, Son of God. It is not without meaning that the face of a man and the face of a young lion are seen on these cherubim and each face looks upon a palm tree. Its symbolical meaning is obvious. The Lord Jesus Christ has come again and visited the earth and the temple and appeared as the Glorified Man and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His is the victory and the glory. When at last this temple stands in Israel's land, and its meaning and measurements, as well as other details, are fully known and understood, it will be known then that His blessed work, victory and person are symbolically seen throughout this house.

In the forty-third chapter we read of the returning glory. The glory will fill this house.

We must notice here especially, that the vision the prophet beheld was "according to the appearance of the vision" he saw before the destruction of the city; "the visions were like the visions," which he saw "by the river Chebar." This points back to the first chapter, when first by the river Chebar the heavens were opened to Ezekiel the priest, and he saw visions of God. At the close of that chapter, we read after the recorded vision, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD." The same vision of glory appeared again to him when Ezekiel had left the river Chebar and gone into the plain (Ezekiel 3:22-23). Then he had witnessed the gradual and solemn departure of the glory of the Lord. "Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight... They stood at the door of the east gate of the house of the LORD, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above" (Ezekiel 10:18-19). Then finally the Shekinah went up and disappeared. "And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezekiel 11:23).

The similarity of the departure of the glory of the Lord from the temple before its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and its future return to the temple of Ezekiel's vision is most interesting. It is the same glory which departed, which returns; it is the same Lord, who resumes relationship with His earthly people.

The withdrawal of the visible glory of the Lord meant the departure of His gracious presence from among His people, which was followed by judgment. The return of the visible glory means the return of His gracious presence among them, and that the judgment, which has lasted so long, is forever gone. The departure of glory was through the east gate and was finally seen upon the mountain at the east side of the city; the return is from the way of the east, and the glory of the Lord enters through the east gate. But it is not only a visible glory, but the Lord Himself is in the Shekinah, Ezekiel beheld above the firmament and the cherubim, when he saw the glory of the Lord at the river Chebar, he heard His voice. And here also His voice is mentioned “like the sound of many waters.” From Ezekiel 48:6-7, we learn, that after the glory had entered the house, the Lord addressed the prophet out of the house.

The Lord Himself in all His glory is manifested and enters the temple, the place of His rest and glory. The cherubim will be seen in person, and from the New Testament we learn that angels will be with Him also. His glory will then cover Israel’s land and the earth. “His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had bright beams out of His side (marginal reading) and there was the hiding of His power.” This is how Habakkuk describes the same manifestation of the glory of the Lord and the coming of the Lord of glory. (See Isaiah 40:5; Isaiah 58:8; Isaiah 60:1-22; Isaiah 66:18. Isaiah’s great vision may be viewed as foreshadowing this manifestation of His glory. He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne and His train filled the temple. The seraphim cried one unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory. And as the prophet was cleansed and his iniquity taken away, and as he became the messenger of the Lord Isaiah 6:1-13), so the nation Israel will be cleansed and forgiven and become the messenger of Jehovah. (Such an application seems warranted in view of the message Ezekiel received from the Lord to the people, Ezekiel 48:6-12.)

When the Spirit had transported the prophet into the inner court of the temple, he discovered that the glory of the Lord filled the house. We repeat it, no such thing happened when the returned Jewish remnant had entered the temple. When the old men, who had seen the Solomonic temple and knew of its glory, beheld the foundation of the second temple, they wept Ezra 3:12. When the house was dedicated, no glory returned, no cloud was seen, no Shekinah filled the house. Nor is it a spiritual glory, the glory of the church, as so many seem to believe.

But Haggai, who with Zechariah prophesied during the rebuilding of the temple, uttered a significant prophecy while that second house was building--a prophecy which must be linked with Ezekiel’s vision of the returning glory: “For thus

saith the LORD of Hosts: yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory” Haggai 2:6-23). This was not the house they were building. It is a future house, a future temple. That house will be built when the heavens and the earth are being shaken, when all nations shake, and when the desire of all nations, the King of Glory, the Prince of Peace, our Lord comes. Then this house will be filled with glory.

It will be a visible glory. It will be a permanent glory. He will now dwell gloriously in the midst of the children of Israel (Ezekiel 48:7). This visible glory will be seen over Jerusalem, like as it was of old, a cloud by day and a shining, flaming fire by night. “And Jehovah will create over every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and over its convocations a cloud by day and a smoke and the brightness of a flame of fire by night, for over all the glory shall be a covering Isaiah 4:5.

Another acknowledged difficulty is the one concerning the restored sacrifices and ordinances.

But what do these ordinances mean? Here are priests again standing before an altar, bringing bloody sacrifices, burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings. Is this to be taken literally also? Some expositors have stated that all this had a meaning in the past and could only be true in connection with the second temple. Others attempt to read into it a spiritual meaning. All, or nearly all commentators, think it inconceivable that such sacrifices could ever be brought again in a future temple. Those expositors who combat the premillennial coming of the Lord and the literal restoration of Israel, consider the supposed impossibility of a satisfactory explanation of this part of Ezekiel’s visions, the collapse of the premillennial argument.

Sacrifices of bulls and goats were brought by Israel in their past history; the Lord commanded His people to do this. Every Christian knows that these sacrifices foreshadowed the work of Christ, His great sacrifice on the cross. In themselves these sacrifices Israel brought could not take away sins, nor give rest to the conscience, nor could they make the worshipper perfect. The Epistle to the Hebrews demonstrates this fully.

All these sacrifices had a prospective character, looking forward to the work of the cross. And when the Lamb of God died, when His blessed lips uttered the never-to-be-forgotten words, “It is finished,” and God’s hand rent the veil from top to bottom, the prospective character of these sacrifices was forever ended.

The new and living way into God's presence, into the holiest, had been made by His blood. During this age Israel has no temple, and all their Levitical ordinances can no longer be practised by them. As Hosea declared, they are without a sacrifice Hosea 3:4.

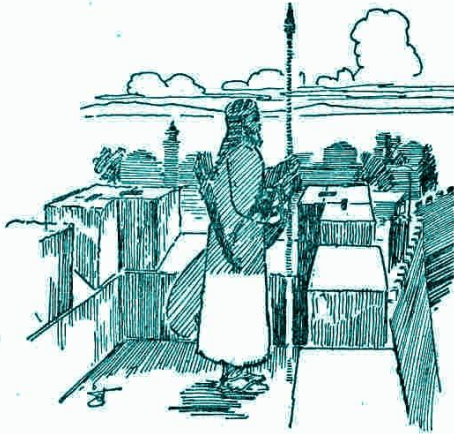
God, during this age, our present age, which began with the rejection of Christ by Israel and ends with His return, is gathering a heavenly people, the Church. The Church has for its worship no earthly place, no temple, but worships in spirit and in truth, in a heavenly sanctuary. There are no sacrifices, priests, altars, in connection with the true Church, the body of Christ. Christ is all. He is the sacrifice, the priest and the altar. That the enemy has produced upon Christian ground a ritualism which is aped after the Jewish system and which denies as such the gospel and Christianity, is well known. They have invented altars, and sacrifices, and priests. This is the Judaizing of the Church, "the other gospel which is not another," upon which the Spirit of God has pronounced the curse of God Galatians 1:1-24). The day is coming when the Lord will deal in judgment with the apostate church which denies His Son and His work, while His true church will be taken to the place which He has prepared.

After the prophecy of the division of the land, comes the majestic ending, the last message this man of God uttered: "And the name of that city from that day shall be 'Jehovah Shammah,' the LORD is there." It is a fitting finale to this great book. In its beginning, we see the glory of the Lord departing. Throughout the pages of the book we read of Israel's rebellion, Jerusalem's judgments, the nation's disobedience and rejection. Then follow the messages of hope--Israel's conversion, the regathering of the twelve tribes, the final conflict, the returning glory of the Lord; and from that day the name of the city will be Jehovah Shammah. Because He has manifested His gracious presence in the midst of His people and established His throne, blessed His people with all the spiritual and national blessings promised by His holy prophets, destroyed all their enemies, and covered all with His visible glory once more, therefore the city will have the name "Jehovah is there." What a glory it will be for Him. The city through which He once walked with weary feet, the Son of God garbed in servant's form, the city through which He was dragged, when the cross was laid upon His shoulders, the city which cast Him out, the city outside of which He endured the cross and despised the shame--that same city will be made in that day the glory spot of the earth.

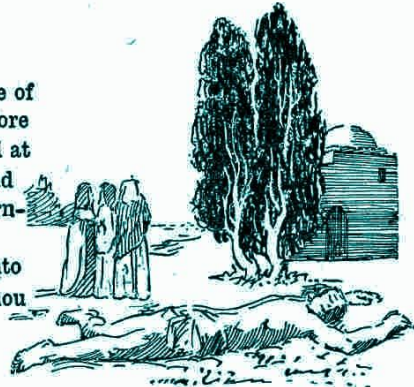
Pictorial Short Bible Story on Ezekiel by Gustav Doré (Public Domain)

EZEKIEL A WATCHMAN

Son of man, I have made thee a



unto the house of
Israel: therefore
hear the word at
my mouth, and
give them warn-
ing from me.
When I say unto
the wicked, Thou
shalt surely



and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same



shall die in his
iniquity; but
his blood will
I require at
thine hand.
Yet if thou



the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a



doth turn from
his righteousness,
and commit iniquity,
and I lay a
stumblingblock



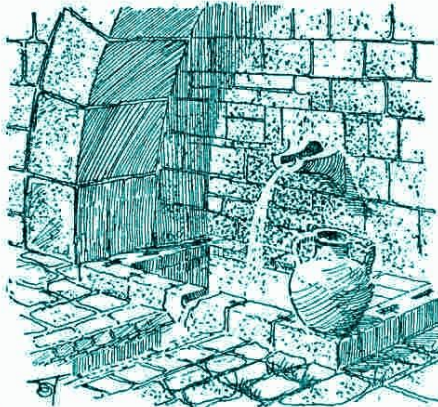
he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

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EZEK. III: 17-20.

THE NEW HEART

Then will I sprinkle clean



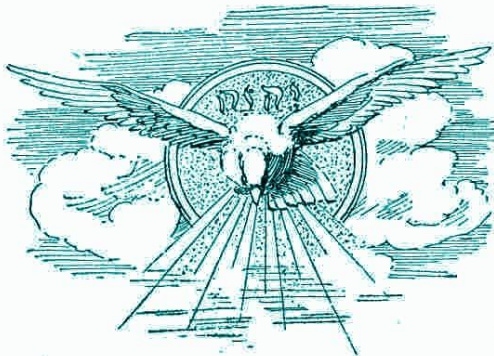
upon you, and
ye shall be clean:
from all your
filthiness, and
from all your



will I cleanse you. A new
heart also will I give you,
and a new spirit will I
put within you: and I will
take away the stony



out of your flesh, and I will
give you an heart of flesh.
And I will put my



within you,
and cause
you to



in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the



that I gave
to your
fathers;
and ye
shall be my

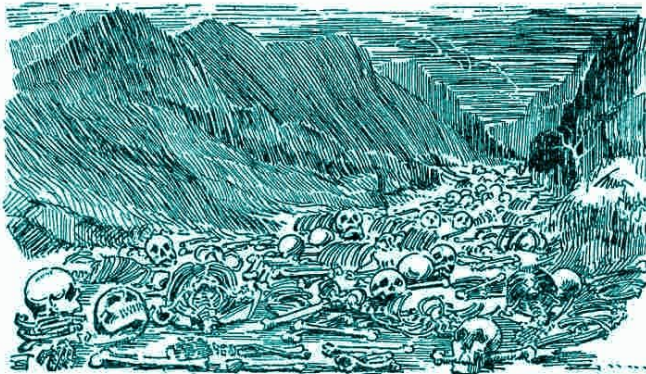


and I will be your God.

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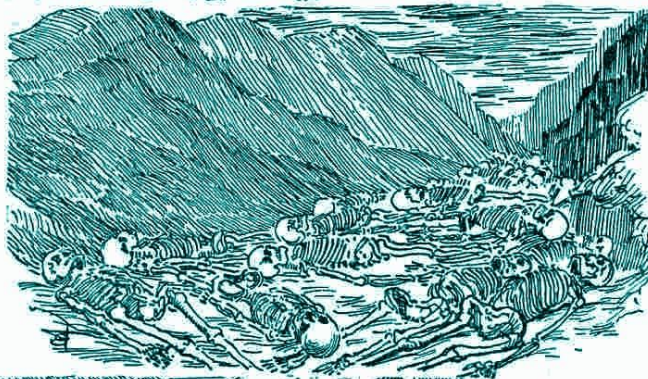
THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the



And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. * * *

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the



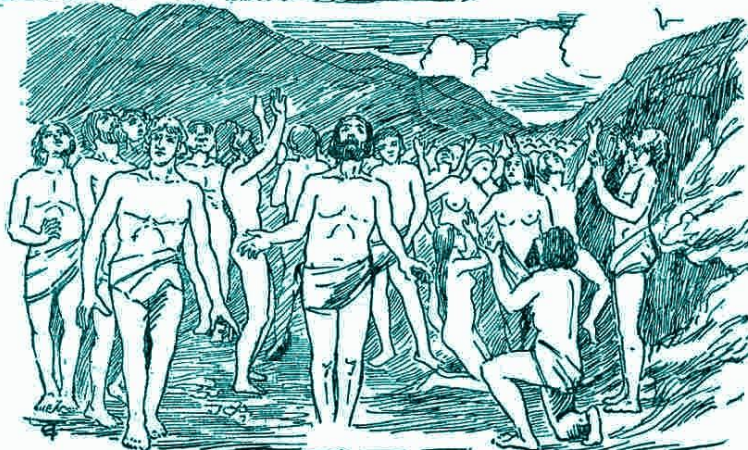
bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered

them above: but there was no breath in



Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God:

come from the four winds. O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and



upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

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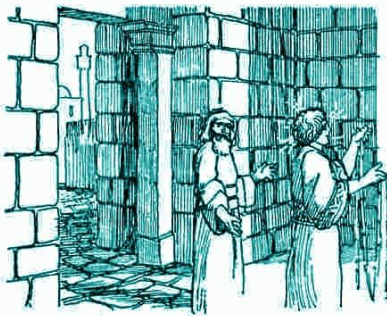
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EZEK. XXXVII: 1-2, 7-10.

THE LIFE GIVING STREAM

Then brought he me out of the way of the



northward,
and led me
about the
way without
unto the
utter gate
by the way
that looketh
eastward;
and, behold,
there ran out



on the right side. And when the man that had the



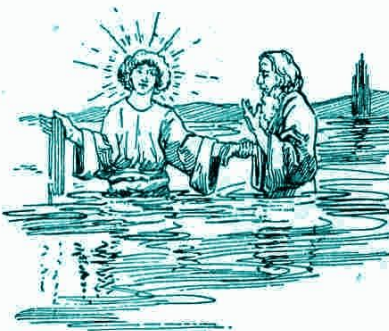
went forth
eastward, he
measured a
thousand
cubits, and
he brought
me through
the waters;
the waters
were to the



Again he measured a
thousand, and brought
me through the waters;
the waters were to the



Again he measured a
thousand, and brought
me through; the waters
were to the



Afterward
he measured
a thousand
and it was a
river that I
could not
pass over:
for the
waters
were risen,
waters to



a river that could not be passed over.

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EZEK. XLVII: 2-5.

There are Four Temples in the Bible

First Temple – Solomon's Temple



Solomon's temple – Built by King Solomon, the son of David.

When Moses delivered the Israelites out from Egypt as a new community, he built a tabernacle so that God can be worshipped and revered in one place. Since they were travelling from one place to another, the tabernacle could be dismantled and also set up. Later Joshua, Moses' assistant led the Israelites into Canaan

land, defeating the natives there and formed a nation as God instructed him to do. And in the days of Judges, when they sinned and rebelled, the nation was disunited and in chaos. The furnitures in the tabernacle were taken and transported from place to place!

When King Solomon took over the nation after a superb rule by King David, he built the temple for God as instructed by Him. It was built in 972BC and stood 210 feet high.

The primary reason is that temple in Jerusalem signifies to the world that Yahweh is the God of Israel and there is none other.

The secondary reason for this temple is to unite the nation of Israel to worship Yahweh, the one true God.

The temple was destroyed 586BC by the Babylonians! The Israelites were shaken to the core because they thought there were other gods who could be more powerful than Yahweh. But God had shown to them that He was not just the God of Israel but the God who controls the whole world! He does not confine Himself in the temple, of course!

Second temple - Zerubabbel's Temple



Zerubabbel's Temple – Built by Zerubabbel, an exile in Babylon who was allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. It was built in 516BC and was 100 feet high, half the size of Solomon's temple. When the Romans became a superpower, King Herod refurbished and embellished the

temple and it became a very famous icon. At this time, where the temple stood, Jesus was born!

Third Temple – Tribulation Temple



Tribulation Temple – Still in the minds of some at this time of writing.

The second temple, Zerubabbel's or Herod's temple, was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, just as predicted by Jesus Himself. When Jesus died, the veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies was torn into two from top to bottom. This is to signify that the time has come to enable everyone to come before God without fear. Instead of only the high priest could enter, that is only

once a year, now everyone can go before the presence of God but through Jesus Christ, the sacrificial Lamb, dying for the sins of the world.

Will this third temple be built?

Definitely it will be built because it was written clearly in the Bible. Since everything in the first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, second temple by the Romans, this temple will be built without those original articles, perhaps some replica ones. When the New Testament was written, there was no Israel as a nation since they fell to the Babylonians. Since then, the Jews were dominated by Persian, Greeks, and the Romans and after the destruction of AD70, they were dispersed all over the world.

But the Word of God had said there would be a rebuilding of a temple in Israel (2 Thess. 2:4; Daniel 9:27; Rev. 11:1-2; see also, Matthew 24). And in 1948, miraculously, Israel became a nation and thus the Word of God was proven right yet again.

There is this group who called themselves Temple Mount Faithful where they already prepared the foundation stone for the building (or rebuilding) of the temple of Solomon. The garments for priests and furnitures are all ready for service once the temple is built. There is also an increasing attempt to produce a red heifer (currently there is a farm in America doing that) to initiate back the animal sacrifices. Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute claimed to be ready for the temple to be built and that the Red Heifer has now been qualified for temple sacrifice.

(Whew! How close we are to the rapture? A time where God would snatch away believers from His wrath in what is known as The Great Tribulation)

There are many religious nationalistic Jews in Israel today who are all for the rebuilding of the temple but there are also many secular Jews who don't bother about it.

The only major obstacle to the building of the temple is that the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic architecture and a mosque in the vicinity that stand in the way. The Dome is in an area called the Temple Mount where the original Solomon's temple once stood. That particular area of the Temple Mount is controlled by a Muslim Trust (Jordanians) named the Wakf. This control was handed to them by Israelis themselves after they annexed Jerusalem from the Arabs in 1967! Although the overall security is still under the jurisdiction of the Jews, that place itself has become a hyper sensitive issue for both the Jews and the Palestinians.

Recently, some people had suggested building the Temple Mount side by side with the Dome of the Rock. One young scholar of Jewish law, Frankel, spearheaded the thought. Dome of the Rock could be the outer courts for non-Jews. Since most of the world is weary of the wars between the Jews and Palestinians, so there could be a possibility that Jerusalem to become an international city for all. This could lead to the temple being built. However, there are oppositions all round by Muslims as well as Jewish people who wanted to do away with the Dome of the Rock.

There is also this political guy called Moshe Feiglin who harbours the ambition to become the next Prime Minister and rebuild the temple by all means. He said the temple is the essence of the Jewish state.

No one knows how the temple will be built but according to the Bible, God already did away with the temple of God as Jesus had set everyone free from animal sacrifices and rituals. These are but shadows of things to come! So the tribulation temple is not what God intended it to be yet I believe God still views it as important because it would cause Jews to come together for the worship of the true God. It will be trampled by the Gentiles in the last days as they attack Jerusalem again. The temple will be destroyed but to what extend no one knows.

Many Christians believe that when the temple is built, rapture will take place and when Jerusalem is being attacked, led by the Anti-Christ, Jesus would return. He would defeat the enemies and rule for 1,000 years. During those days, a millennium temple (fourth temple) will be built in which we now turn.

Fourth Temple - Millennium Temple

Millennium Temple – Ezekiel’s vision (Ezekiel 40 – 47; Rev. 7:14-15)

There are some differences in the Ezekiel’s temple as compared to the others. The outer court mentioned there in Ezekiel did not speak of Gentiles at all. During that time, God receives everyone who wants Him. No articles of the temple, no high priest or a change in order of priests, no ceremonies or rituals except the animal sacrifices. Why do animal sacrifices still needed during the time of Christ’s physical reign on earth?



Ezekiel's Millennium Temple

The Millennium is not only going to be a period of restoration as far as the Earth and its ecology is concerned, but a period whereby there will be restoration through true divine worship and education, and this is where the Priests come in.

The Priests, though Levites, will be Levites, but through the sons of Zadok. Though the Levites have sinned greatly against Yahweh, they are going to pay for this dearly, but they [the Sons of Zadok] will still serve God [Yahweh] but will do all they are commanded to do. The sons of Zadok are granted this very special privilege due to the faithfulness they had shown in the past with regards to the true worship of God [Yahweh].

The Priests though they live and work in the Temple area [which is [given] to them only] they don't inherit anything like the Prince or the people, for God [Yahweh] is going to be their inheritance.

This area of 25000 x 10000 cubits [8.5 x 3.3 Miles] will be for the Sanctuary and for the place where they [the Priests] shall live and work.

The Priests live and work in the Temple area, everything outside of this area belongs to the Prince, but the area where these Priests live and work has been given to them. Though the Prince can give whatever he wants, the Priests cannot, neither will they be allowed to sell any part of the land granted to them.

Of everything that is dedicated to the Temple, it will become theirs, and they will also eat from the sacrifices and offerings at the Temple.

The Priests cannot drink wine, the Priests must not grow long locks, and the Priests must also keep their hair trimmed. The Priests will wear linen turbans and gowns whilst working in the inner Temple area so that they do not sweat

during the period of their service. These garments must be removed and left in the Temple when they go outside in order that holiness may not be imparted to people in the outer court.

They cannot marry divorced women, but can marry virgins of the people of Israel, or a widow of a Priest.

During the Millennium, there will be immortals and mortals. The immortals who are of the 1st [and better] resurrection will not die, but members of the great crowd will. Its only until the end of the Millennial Reign that names will be then written in the Book of Life.

The Millennial Reign is only a Restorative period leading up to Book of Life and being granted to eat from the Tree of Life. There will still be rebellion, and the greatest rebellion of all will be when Satan is set free for a little while prior to being destroyed in The Lake of Fire.

The Priests cannot come into contact with anything that is dead. They must not even eat anything that has died naturally or that has died from being torn apart. They must not come into contact with dead bodies, except for those of dead relatives, and even then, the Priests must go through a cleansing period of 7 days before resuming any work at the Temple again. They must be ceremonial clean and spiritually clean to be able to carry out service in the Temple.

Contrary to popular belief, there will still be [death] and even [rebellion] during the 1000 year restorative period of the Millennial Reign.

Not only are the Priests to observe the laws on dead bodies, but they are to instruct the people of God [Yahweh] in all [his] ways, in that they are taught the differences between good and bad and clean and unclean. Those committing sins will no longer have access or be permitted to enter the Temple, they will die in their sin.

The Priests will be responsible for teaching all of the Statutes of God [Yahweh] relating to his Laws, Sabbaths and Festivals.

They will also act as judges in cases and they will judge not only in love and godliness, but in all righteousness, impartiality and according to the Law and will of God [Yahweh].

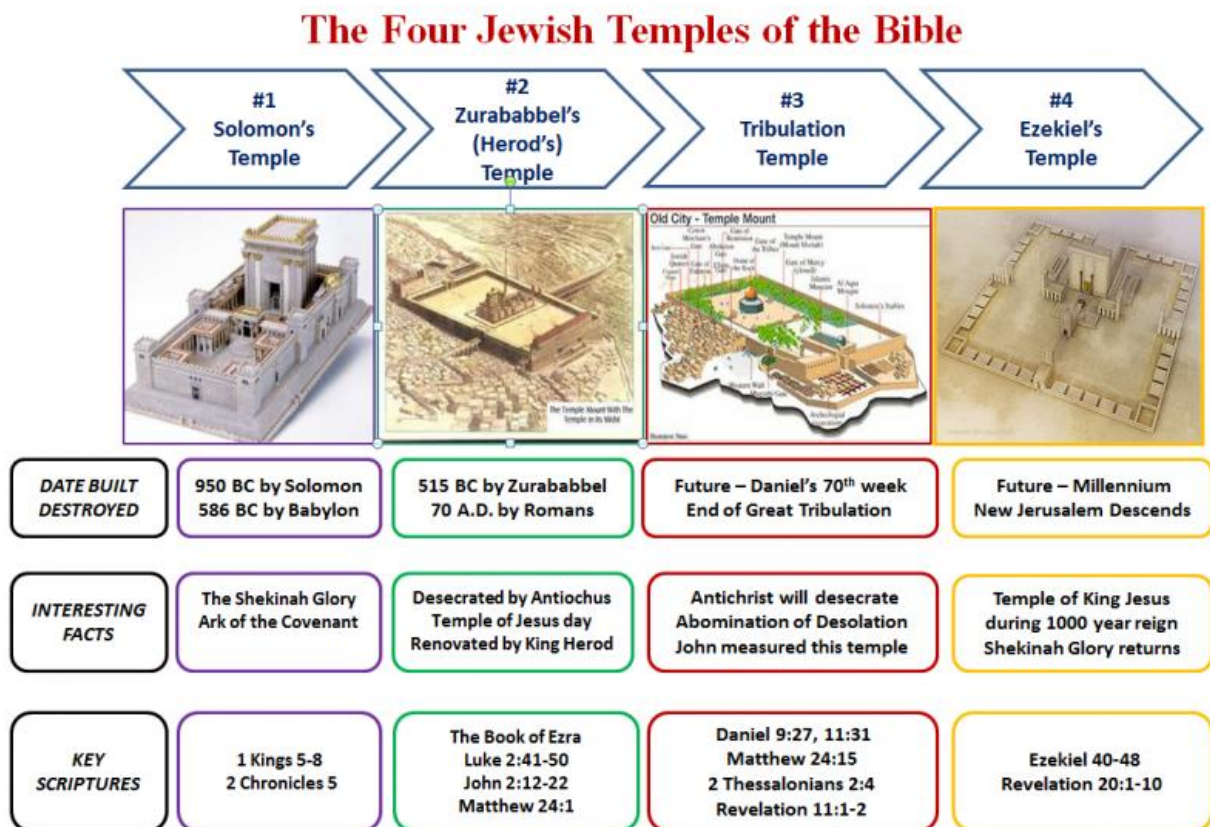
This will be a period where it will be clear concerning the true worship of God [Yahweh] and the worship that God [Yahweh] is seeking and wanting.

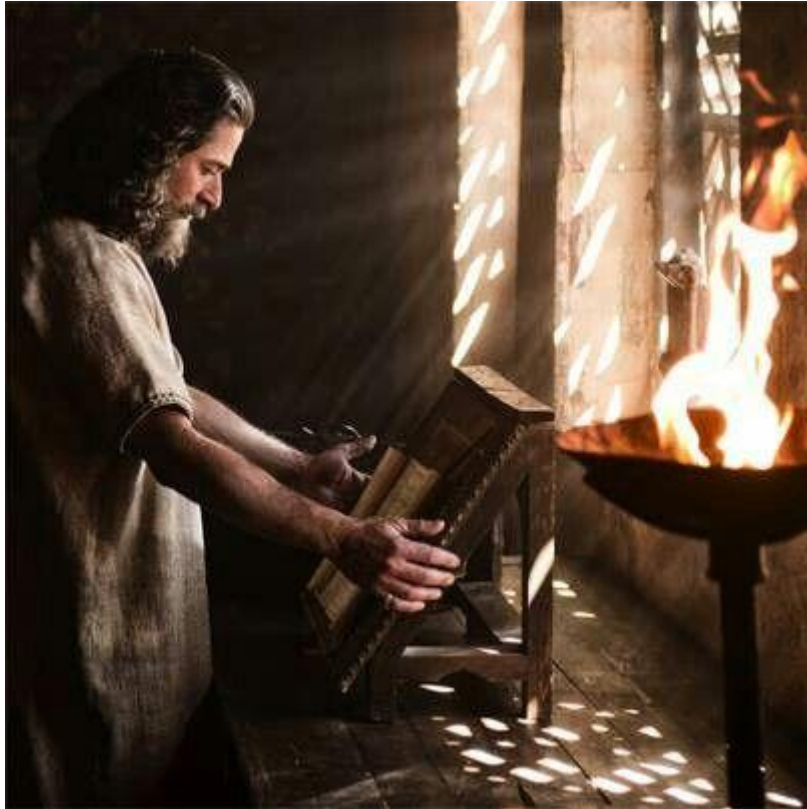
Animal sacrifices in the Millennium Temple could be used as an illustration of a Greater Sacrifice of Christ in Israel during that time, just like we do communion in the church. It is like a remembrance that Christ has become the ultimate Sacrifice for sins. Anyway, animal sacrifices before Jesus died on the cross could not forgive sins, just a covering of sins, in wait for the death of Christ on the cross (Hebrews 10:4, 11)

The articles and rituals exclusion I believe are reminders that Christ is the center of worship!

There are still entrances and gates which are also reminders of God's holiness and to keep out unholy things. As far as Jerusalem is concerned, the city has become the ultimate worship centre in the millennium reign of Christ (Isaiah 4:2; 62:1-3)

After 1,000 years are over, there will be a new Jerusalem coming from heaven (Rev. 3:12; 21:2) and note this, without a temple! (Rev. 21:22)





Theology of Daniel

Many people today think of a prophet as any person who sees the future. While the gift of prophecy certainly includes the ability to see the future, a prophet is far more than just a person with that ability.

According to Judaism, Daniel is not one of the 55 prophets. His writings include visions of the future, which they believe to be true; however, his mission was not that of a prophet. His visions of the future were never intended to be proclaimed to the people; they were designed to be written down for future generations. Thus, they are Writings, not Prophecies, and are classified accordingly in the Tanakh.

What is a Prophet?

Many people today think of a prophet as any person who sees the future. While the gift of prophecy certainly includes the ability to see the future, a prophet is far more than just a person with that ability.

A prophet is basically a spokesman for God (Yehovah), a person chosen by God to speak to people on God's behalf and convey a message or teaching. Prophets were role models of holiness, scholarship and closeness to God. They set the standards for the entire community.

The Hebrew word for a prophet, navi (Nun-Beit-Yod-Alef) comes from the term niv sefatayim meaning "fruit of the lips," which emphasizes the prophet's role as a speaker.

The Talmud teaches that there were hundreds of thousands of prophets: twice as many as the number of people who left Egypt, which was 600,000. But most of the prophets conveyed messages that were intended solely for their own generation and were not reported in Scripture. Scripture identifies only 55 prophets of Israel.

A prophet is not necessarily a man. Scripture records the stories of seven female prophets, listed below, and the Talmud reports that Sarah's prophetic ability was superior to Abraham's.

A prophet is not necessarily a Jew. The Talmud reports that there were prophets among the gentiles (most notably Balaam, whose story is told in Numbers 22), although they were not as elevated as the prophets of Israel (as the story of Balaam demonstrates). And some of the prophets, such as Jonah, were sent on missions to speak to the gentiles.

According to some views, prophecy is not a gift that is arbitrarily conferred upon people; rather, it is the culmination of a person's spiritual and ethical development. When a person reaches a sufficient level of spiritual and ethical achievement, the Shechinah (Divine Spirit) comes to rest upon him or her. Likewise, the gift of prophecy leaves the person if that person lapses from his or her spiritual and ethical perfection.

The greatest of the prophets was Moses. It is said that Moses saw all that all of the other prophets combined saw, and more. Moses saw the whole of the Torah, including the Prophets and the Writings that were written hundreds of years later. All subsequent prophecy was merely an expression of what Moses had already seen. Thus, it is taught that nothing in the Prophets or the Writings can be in conflict with Moses' writings, because Moses saw it all in advance.

The Talmud states that the writings of the prophets will not be necessary in the World to Come, because in that day, all people will be mentally, spiritually and ethically perfect, and all will have the gift of prophecy.

Who are the Prophets of the Jewish Scriptures

Who are the Prophets of the Jewish Scriptures?

The following list of prophets is based on the Talmud and Rashi.

Abraham	Gen 11:26 - 25:10
Isaac	Gen 21:1 - 35:29
Jacob	Gen 25:21 - 49:33
Moses	Ex. 2:1 - Deut. 34:5
Aaron	Ex. 4:14 - Num. 33:39
Joshua	Ex. 17:9 - 14, 24:13, 32:17 - 18, 33:11; Num. 11:28 - 29, 13:4 - 14:38; 27:18 - 27:23, Deut. 1:38, 3:28, 31:3, 31:7 - Joshua 24:29
Pinchas	Ex. 6:25; Num. 25:7-25:11; Num. 31:6; Josh. 22:13 - Josh. 24:33; Judges 20:28
Elkanah	I Samuel 1:1 - 2:20
Eli	I Samuel 1:9 - 4:18
Samuel	I Samuel 1:1 - I Samuel 25:1
Gad	I Sam 22:5; II Sam 24:11-19; I Chron 21:9-21:19, 29:29
Nathan	II Sam 7:2 - 17; 12:1 - 25.
David	I Sam 16:1 - I Kings 2:11
Solomon	II Sam 12:24; 1 Kings 1:10 - 11:43
Iddo	II Chron 9:29, 12:15, 13:22
Michaiah son of Imlah	I Kings 22:8-28; II Chron 18:7-27
Obadiah	I Kings 18; Obadiah
Ahiyah the Shilonite	I Kings 11:29-30; 12:15; 14:2-18; 15:29
Jehu son of Hanani	I Kings 16:1 - 7; II Chron 19:2; 20:34
Azariah son of Oded	II Chron 15
Jahaziel the Levite	II Chron 20:14
Eliezer son of Dodavahu	II Chron 20:37
Hosea	Hosea
Amos	Amos
Micah the	Micah

Morashtite

Amoz	(the father of Isaiah)
Elijah	I Kings 17:1 - 21:29; II Kings 1:10-2:15, 9:36-37, 10:10, 10:17
Elisha	I Kings 19:16-19; II Kings 2:1-13:21
Jonah ben Amittai	Jonah
Isaiah	Isaiah
Joel	Joel
Nahum	Nahum
Habakkuk	Habakkuk
Zephaniah	Zephaniah
Uriah	Jeremiah 26:20-23
Jeremiah	Jeremiah
Ezekiel	Ezekiel
Shemaiah	I Kings 12:22-24; II Chron 11:2-4, 12:5-15
Barukh	Jeremiah 32, 36, 43, 45
Neriah	(father of Barukh)
Seraiah	Jeremiah 51:61-64
Mehseiah	(father of Neriah)
Haggai	Haggai
Zechariah	Zechariah
Malachi	Malachi
Mordecai	Esther
Bilshan	
Oded	(father of Azariah)
Hanani	(father of Jehu)
Female Prophets	
Sarah	Gen 11:29 - 23:20
Miriam	Ex. 15:20-21; Num. 12:1-12:15, 20:1
Deborah	Judges 4:1 - 5:31
Hannah	I Sam 1:1 - 2:21

Abigail	I Sam 25:1 - 25:42
Huldah	II Kings 22:14-20
Esther	Esther

God King of Kings

The truth that God is the King of kings and the Lord of lords comes out loud and clear in the book of Daniel, and it comes at no better time. For the setting of the book of Daniel was the sixth-century, a time when Israel, God's chosen nation, was in held in captivity in Babylon. The question on every faithful Jew, especially on the mind of the book's human author, would be whether or not God was really in control, being that His people were now seemingly under the control of human gentile kings. After dealing with some introductory matters, this biblical theology will divide the book of Daniel into three themes, God, Israel, and mankind in general, for it is clear that the scope of this great book extends beyond that of God's covenantal relationship with Israel to the whole of the created universe.

The events in the book of Daniel take place during the sixth-century in Babylon, much taking place in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar who had, in the first of three major campaigns around the region of Israel, had taken some prisoners from Jerusalem, it seemed in an effort to exploit the land of its best and brightest youth to serve in his own court (Dan. 1:3-4). One of these youths was named Daniel. Daniel was taught the arts and sciences of Babylon along with three of his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Dan. 1:6) and clearly distinguished himself among his peers. Daniel's own life and his prominence in Babylon, let alone the prophecies contained in this book would encourage the exiled Jews to hope in God, knowing that He alone is sovereign over all the nations, and that one day would come and establish His kingdom.

It is also important to look shortly into the authorship of the book in order to help interpret the book as a whole as it will shed some light on the perspective of the human author and his experiences. The traditional view is that Daniel wrote the book of Daniel, and this writer holds that view. Daniel's existence is affirmed by Ezekiel's three references to Daniel in his own book (Ez. 14:14, 20; 28:3), verifying the time that Daniel lived (Ezekiel's ministry began around 593 B.C.). Even though Daniel does not speak of himself in the first person until chapter seven, his authorship is assumed and mentioned specifically in 12:4. Even those against Danielian authorship grant that, "the simplest view...is that the bilingual composer passed easily from his Heb. Introduction into the Aram." Jesus himself explicitly speaks of Daniel as having predicted the abomination of

desolation (Matt. 24:15), and at other times the Lord cites the prophecies of Daniel, and therefore shows the content to have originated from Daniel. Also, “the literary unity of the book has been widely acknowledged by scholars of all schools of thought.” The Daniel presented at the beginning of the book, is the Daniel presented at the end. Therefore there is not enough evidence to overthrow the classical understanding of the authorship of Daniel.

God the Most High

While the fall of Judah and Israel, God’s chosen people, is concurrent with the book of Daniel, the book in no way leaves God out of the picture, as if He has laid down His authority or sovereignty – on the contrary, in Daniel, God is seen to be the Absolute Sovereign over all. And that is where we begin.

It is this phrase, “The Most High God” that differentiates the God of Israel from the gods of the nations. He is the “Most High God” there is none greater, none higher – he is the absolute sovereign. And Daniel makes it clear, that even in the midst of seeming defeat, Israel’s God is still on the throne. Even from the very beginning of the book, God’s current sovereignty is clearly seen, for Daniel writes: “*The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his [Nebuchadnezzar] hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God*” (Dan. 1:2).^[7] When the king had a troubling dream (Dan. 2:1) and commanded that the magicians, sorcerers and the like first reveal to him the dream as well as tell him its meaning, Daniel, by the revelation of God reveals and interprets the dream for the king. But even in the dream, God is seen to be the highest, for though the statue is beautiful, and even Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold (Dan. 2:38), the statue will be crushed by “a stone...cut out without hands” (Dan. 2:34). Something that was not from man, would overcome and destroy man’s kingdoms – the best that man had to offer would be turned into dust in one fell swoop. Daniel makes it clear that it is God who has given the kingdom, power, strength, and glory to the earthly kingdom of Babylon, more specifically, to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:37), and one day, the kingdoms of the earth will be fully subjected to the direct rule of God, to destruction, and a new kingdom.

God’s sovereignty over Nebuchadnezzar is seen in the narrative of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego (Dan. 3). For rather than submit to the High God that was revealed to him in his dream, Nebuchadnezzar decides to build an idol, it seems, in a similar fashion to the one he saw in his dream – but with one major difference, it is made from pure gold rather than from various materials. It seems one thing did get through to him, he was the gold head in the dream. So Nebuchadnezzar wants to “symbolically” take over everything, and makes an image of pure gold and make everyone in his kingdom to bow down to it. But there are three who do not, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. They defy this

human king for they serve the one true sovereign. Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar, professing to be the sovereign one has the three thrown into a fiery furnace, but God shows Himself to be the true sovereign and Most High God, for he delivers His three loyal followers, it would seem by His own angel (Dan. 3:25, 28). God will not submit to any human ruler, rather, He requires that human rulers submit to Him.

God's amazing and miraculous intervention in the lives of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego caused Nebuchadnezzar to proclaim that "any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" (Dan. 3:29). God rules; He is the Most High God (Dan. 3:26).

But Nebuchadnezzar's lessons on who is sovereign are not over. Chapter four of Daniel opens up the Nebuchadnezzar himself, giving an account of the "signs and wonders" of the Most High God (Dan. 4:2). Again Nebuchadnezzar has a dream (Dan. 4:5), and again Daniel interprets it for him (Dan. 4:19), but this time, it is not just mere facts that God will one day crush the kingdoms of the world, this time it is personal. God will show Himself sovereign, He will show Himself the Most High God by humbling Nebuchadnezzar. God will order the "tree," who is Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:22), to be cut down (Daniel 4:14), that "the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men" (Dan. 4:17). God will humble this mighty ruler of man, making him as a beast (Daniel 4:23), for this ruler does not repent from his sins nor from his iniquities (Dan. 4:27) as he ought, and claims for himself that which is rightfully God's alone. Even in Daniel's plea with Nebuchadnezzar, we see that God is not just a sovereign, but a righteous and compassionate one, for He does not look pleasingly on those who do not do as He requires (Dan. 6:5, 24). It was not but a year later that the dream came to pass, Nebuchadnezzar, because of his pride, in thinking he himself was the source of his own authority and power, was stripped of his sovereignty by the One true sovereign (Dan. 4:31) and driven from men, becoming like a beast of the field (Dan. 4:32). At the end of the appointed period of humiliation, from the very mouth of Nebuchadnezzar comes the truth that God alone is the everlasting sovereign, whose dominion does not end, who does whatever He pleases to which no one can say, "What have You done?" (Dan. 4:34-35). After this confession, Nebuchadnezzar was restored to his position as king – knowing that God "is able to humble those who walk in pride" (Dan. 4:37).

Belshazzar comes next in line, again showing God's supreme sovereignty – for he, being a descendent of Nebuchadnezzar, had failed to take heed to the warning of Nebuchadnezzar's own life experience and had not humbled his heart (Dan. 5:22). The issue is not that Belshazzar was king, but the issue was his own pride and self-sufficiency. And so, Belshazzar, feeling free of care because of his own pride, would be deposed by God's very hand, and replaced with another man. He was killed that very night, and Darius received the kingdom (Dan. 5:30-31).

One might think that God, being so high, would interact and sovereignly move only when confronted with the most high of men. But God's sovereignty is not just over the big events of history, or only over the appointing of world rulers, but He is sovereign even over the small details. For He sovereignly allowed Daniel to be viewed with favor and compassion by the commander of the court officials when he first came to Babylon (Dan. 1:9).

The Eternal Reign of God

While the book of Daniel does focus on God's current reign during the time of the author, it also focuses on the future and eternal reign of God. God's power over all the nations is seen in chapter two with the rock crushing the image, as was discussed already, and then comes to the forefront in chapter seven. Most modern commentators agree that chapter seven is, "the most important chapter in the Book of Daniel." Chapter seven marks the literary turning point of the book from historical to visions. Yet at the same time, the chapter is bound to those preceding historical accounts because of the use of the Aramaic language and by its own affinity with chapter two, as well as bound to the following chapters containing visions because of subject matter. So chapter seven really joins the two parts of this amazing book together as a whole. Chapter seven begins, setting up the time of the vision to around 553 B. C. when Daniel was about sixty-seven years old (if you put Daniel at 15 years old when taken into captivity in 605 B.C.). Another feature that is brought to bear in chapter seven is the fact that after verse two, it is all in the first person (except for 10:1), emphasizing the fact that it was Daniel himself who had these visions. Much more detail is given in regards to prediction in chapter seven and following than in the rest of the book. For while chapter two did contain prediction regarding the four world empires, as well as the return of Christ, chapter seven and following hone in on the specifics of the events to come. The purpose of this paper is not to look into the minutia of the prophecies, but rather to give the big picture, and there is no mistaking the message of these prophetic chapters – though quite colourful and symbolic, God is the Sovereign Lord, no one has, or will overthrow Him or His rule. He is and always will be the Most High God.

Israel, land of the chosen people

The book itself falls into a time where the anger of God was against the people of Israel, just as Moses warned the people if they forsook the Lord (Deut. 31:17). But despite these warnings the people consistently rebelled against the Lord and so they were taken into exile. And so this book shows Israel, and the world, that “the God of Israel was the true and living God, who possessed objective metaphysical existence, before Whom the gods of the heaven were vain, empty delusions, not having objective reality.” This would serve as a great encouragement to Israel, and to Daniel himself, because their situation looked hopeless. But God would not forsake them ultimately, for He will one day bring His kingdom; the kingdom will be given to His saints forever (Dan. 7:18). Daniel answers the people who say in Jeremiah 33:24, “The two families which the Lord chose, He has rejected them.” God had not forgotten Israel, far from it; He was working out His plan for their good.

The book of Daniel adds to the theology of the end times, giving specifics to promises to Israel – for just as the four kingdoms of the world were actual kingdoms, the kingdom of God also will be real, and Israel will receive the promises, even though they have been unfaithful – God is faithful (as seen also in the book of Esther). Daniel was written after all the major prophets, and appears in this order in the English Bible, but actually in the Hebrew Old Testament it was included in the Writings not the Prophets. It appears this is so, because although Daniel did have a prophetic ministry, his ministry was different in character from the other major prophets and therefore was never called a prophet, but rather a seer and wise man. Isaiah 46:9-10 says: “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’” So Israel could take these things to heart, knowing the God they serve would overcome their current plight.

Also the reason for Israel’s current plight is made evident, for they had committed unfaithful deeds against God (Dan. 9:11), they were sinful, but there is hope, for even in the setting of this confession is Jeremiah’s prophecy of return (Dan. 9:2), and because of their God, their life was not over, but God had sustained them even in the midst of a conquering gentile nation. Truly, the book of Daniel would be of great encouragement to the Jews that read it, for through this book, God assured Israel that they would endure, and that the nation would continue to have a place in history – their Messiah would come – God Himself would reign.

The remainder of the world

The “contest” (if it can even be called that, for there really was no contest) between God and human rulers makes it clear that all earthly kingdoms will fail, for God wins every time. This is shown in a picturesque form in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream when the stone crushes the image (Dan. 2:44). Though Nebuchadnezzar thought he made himself sovereign of “peoples, nations, and men of every language” (Dan. 3:29), it was in fact God who placed him in that position – and clearly therefore, God is the one who puts anyone in power. For this is what God created man to do, as His image, to rule, to represent His rule in the world (Gen. 1:27-28). Even gentiles, at this time, would be included in this for they too are made in God’s image – and God held them to that standard, as is clearly seen in God’s show of authority over them in the book of Daniel.

The transitory nature of man’s kings is also seen in the book, in direct contrast to the constant rule of God. For in the book of Daniel, three “generations” of kings pass by (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius). Even in the visions, the rapid succession of kingdoms is contrasted against the singular rule of God. This beast, then that beast, then a terrible beast, but it is destroyed, and God rules. The kings of men therefore are not worthy of trust – as Daniel shows in his episode with the lion’s den. He placed his trust in God, not in men, and the men, who trusted in themselves, found their end, in an ironic way, exactly where they thought was going to happen to Daniel (Dan. 6:24).

But, even with all this negativity, there is a glimmer of hope, even a great burst of light in this book for mankind in general. The language shift in Daniel indicates something quite dramatic (from 2:4b through 7:28). This book, these prophecies were not just for Israel, but also the whole world – for God is the sovereign of the whole world, not just of Israel as was discussed earlier. There is a stark “gentile” nature that flows out of the use of the Aramaic language, being that it was the “*lingua franca*” of the time. If anyone in Israel thought their Messiah was for their nation only, this book would stare them right in the face with the contrary. It is not just Israel, it has never been, for His dominion includes all peoples, nations and languages (Dan. 7:14). Therefore, for mankind in general, there is great hope to be found in Daniel, for there will one day be a kingdom, and one “like a son of man” will come and reign forever (Dan. 7:13-14).

Book of Daniel Prophecy:

End of Days Bible Study of the Prophet Daniel

Jesus had died. He had been “cut off from the land of the living.” On the third day, He was raised back up to life. On the following forty days, He met with His apostles to help them in understanding how the events that they had witnessed had been prophesied and how that His rejection, death, burial and resurrection were a fulfillment of these ancient prophecies. There were over 300 prophecies written from 400 to 1,000 years previous to His coming. All of them were fulfilled.

One of the most remarkable (to me, at least) of these prophecies is one made by Daniel. "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Daniel 9:24-27).

More than any other book of the Hebrew Scriptures, the writings of the prophet Daniel confront us with evidence of the time of Messiah's coming—evidence that many people would rather not see. But it is there and cannot be ignored.

That Daniel was indeed a prophet is well substantiated in the Christian Faith. He accurately prophesied the rise of the Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman empires even at a time when the Babylonian Empire, which preceded them all, was at its height. He accurately predicted the fortunes, conflicts, wars and conspiracies of the two kingdoms of Syria and Egypt between the fracturing of the Greek Empire and the conquest by Rome. He prophesied the role of the Maccabees during this period. It is Daniel's detailed accuracy in his prophecies that has caused many critics to try to give a late date to the book of Daniel, although no evidence has been discovered that would negate the book's composition at the

time that it claims to have been written. At the very latest, the book was completed around 530 B.C.E.

Many people think that biblical prophecies about the end of the world and the Battle of Armageddon are "a Christian thing." You know, for religious fanatics and other societal oddballs. But end-times prophecy is not just a Christian thing. It's a Jewish thing because many of the most well-known New Testament prophecies were foreshadowed by the Old Testament prophets centuries before the birth of Christ.

Many of today's best known prophecies, including the rise of the Antichrist and the Battle of Armageddon, were recorded by the prophet Daniel in the sixth century B.C. Daniel wrote his prophecies during the 70 years that the people of Israel were held captive in the land of Babylon.

Daniel served as part of the royal court of King Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned in Babylon from 605 - 562 B.C. The prophecies came in the form of dreams, both the king's dreams and Daniel's dreams. For most of the details, Daniel was given the interpretation, but not all. Fortunately, we can look back with the benefit of history, and the clarification of later scriptures, and can often see clearly what Daniel could not. Ironically, this, in itself, was one of the prophecies Daniel recorded (Daniel 12:4,9).

In this study, we will look at several of the key dreams and what their prophecies mean for Israel and the rest of the world in the years before Armageddon. Keep in mind that each of these prophecies is not meant to stand alone. It is only once we have looked at *all* of the prophecies that a clear picture of the Bible's account of the end of world history begins to form.

The Historical Context

The nation of Judah had fallen away from God. Jeremiah had foretold that God would withhold His blessings and protection, and that Judah would be conquered and taken into captivity which would last for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10). This was later fulfilled when Babylon conquered Judah and took them into captivity, the first deportation according to history took place in 605 B.C. and the return in 535 B.C. Daniel himself was one of the young men taken into captivity and lived to see the return commence under Darius (Daniel 9:2).

Seventy years fulfilled a Divine pattern. The Law of Moses had commanded that every 7th year be a "sabbatical year." This Law of God had been neglected for most of Israel's history, so the Lord decreed that they would spend one year in

captivity for every sabbatical year they had failed to keep as a nation. They had missed 70 sabbatical years during their 490 years as a nation.

But also, this 490 year figure not only looked back into time, it also looked forward. The Messiah would come and “make atonement for iniquity” in 70 units of seven, referred to in the context as “weeks” but the word means a unit of seven. In this case, it would not be 7 days but 7 years (Daniel 9:24; cf. 2 Chronicles 36:20,21; Leviticus 25:3,4).

The time of Daniel's prophecy can be precisely pin pointed due to the mention of Darius beginning his reign (Daniel 9:1,2). This would make it 538 B.C. The angel Gabriel assures Daniel that not only will he see the return from captivity, but also gives much more far reaching information concerning the coming of the Messiah another five centuries in the future.

The Messiah and His Mission

The prophecy states forth the primary mission of the Messiah, and gives several particulars in addition to a very precise timing of the event:

1) The Messiah and His Mission

The prophecy states forth the primary mission of the Messiah, and gives several particulars in addition to a very precise timing of the event:

2) He would bring in everlasting righteousness. (9:24).

Jesus enacted heaven's plan to make sinners righteous by grace through faith (Romans 1:16,17; 3:21-26).

3) He would seal up the vision (9:24).

This means to bring to completion; to close or finish. With the coming of Jesus and His new covenant, Divine revelation was completed. With the generation who were alive during Jesus' life, we see the last living prophets and prophetesses. With those men and women and the messages given through them, prophecy would cease. (Hebrews 1:1,2; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

4) He would anoint the Holy Place. (9:24).

Jesus is the Messiah (Hebrew), or Christ (Greek). Both of these words mean “anointed one.” When Jesus ascended into heaven, He entered the true, spiritual Holy Place where He lives and intercedes for us (Hebrews 9:11,12).

5) He will make a firm covenant with many. (9:27).

His covenant is the New Testament, ratified by His death (Hebrews 8:6).

6) He will bring OT sacrifices to an end. (9:27).

He did this by offering Himself as our only perfect sin offering, thus fulfilling the Law and taking that system out of the way. (Hebrews 7:18,19; 24,25).

The Prophetic Chronology

Daniel's prophecy itself indicates when it will be fulfilled. It tells us of the beginning point, the duration period, and the fulfilling event.

The beginning point (9:25). The edict to rebuild Jerusalem is where we begin the 490 year count down to the Messiah. There were actually three such edicts issued, so we'll have to figure out which one.

The duration period (9:24). 70 weeks. Again, the term “week” means “unit of seven” and could refer to seven days, weeks, months or years. Since the looking back covered 490 years, then it is reasonable to do the same looking forward.

The fulfilling event (9:26). This would be the 'cutting off of the Messiah.’ This refers to His death. This will happen in the middle of the final “unit of seven” or 486 1/2 years in the future.

In 457 B.C. Ezra led a group back to rebuild Jerusalem by the King's edict (Ezra 7:6,7; 9:9). To this beginning point. Add the above 486 1/2 years and we come to 30 A.D. which is the date of the crucifixion! Following this, as punishment for putting the Messiah to death, Jerusalem would be destroyed. This, too, was accomplished by the Roman armies led by "the prince who is to come" (this would be Titus who would take his father's place as emperor) exactly as Daniel had said (cf. Matthew 24:15; 34). After a siege, Jerusalem was burned and the sanctuary was completely destroyed. But Jesus had already ascended back to heaven to serve in the new sanctuary. Our hope is in Him!

The Dream of King Nebuchadnezzar

The first prophecy, which is recounted in Daniel chapter two, sets the broad framework for the rest of the prophecies. In this chapter, Daniel is called to reveal the interpretation of a dream that has been troubling King Nebuchadnezzar. As the king slept, he saw a great statue (Daniel 2:31-35) with a

head of fine gold, a chest and arms of silver, a belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

But then, as King Nebuchadnezzar watched, a stone was cut out of a mountain "without hands" and struck the image on its feet, breaking the statue in pieces:

"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:35).

What to make of such a strange dream? Daniel is not left to wonder. He is given the following interpretation: The four parts of the statue - the gold head, the silver bust, the bronze belly and thighs, and the iron legs - are four kingdoms. Those kingdoms are as follows:

1. The first kingdom is King Nebuchadnezzar's own kingdom of Babylon for, Daniel is told, *"the God of heaven has given [Nebuchadnezzar] a kingdom, power, strength, and glory"* (v. 38)

The Babylonian kingdom reached its peak during Daniel's time.

2. *After Babylon "shall arise another kingdom, inferior to yours..."* (v. 39).
3. This was Medo-Persia, which conquered Babylon in the fifth century B.C. The story of the conquest is told in the fifth chapter of Daniel, in which King Nebuchadnezzar's successor, King Belshazzar, sees mysterious fingers writing on the wall. Daniel is called to read the writing, in which God rebukes King Belshazzar for his pride and commits the kingdom of Babylon into the hands of his enemies, the Medes (Daniel 5:1-26). It is from this story that we get the phrase "the handwriting is on the wall."
4. After the second kingdom, Daniel is told shall arise *"...another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth"* (v. 39).

This prophecy was fulfilled approximately three centuries after Daniel's death. At this time, Medo-Persia was

conquered by Greece, which rose to worldwide power in the third century B.C. Just as Daniel foretold, this third kingdom was known for its extensive use of bronze.

The fourth kingdom is somewhat different from the previous three:

5. *"And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others."*
6. While not specifically identified, there is little question that this kingdom is Rome, which conquered Greece sometime between 250 i;½ 30 B.C. At its height, the Roman Empire comprised almost all of the Western world known at the time, including most of Europe, the Middle East, Egypt, and North Africa. In addition to its size, Rome was notorious for its cruelty.

Portions of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Yet to Come

Now we turn our attention to the portions of this prophecy that have not yet been fulfilled. It is important to keep in mind that, because the early parts of this prophecy were fulfilled so precisely, we can expect the latter portions to be fulfilled just as precisely.

First, the stone. God tells Daniel that this represents a fifth kingdom, a kingdom that is God's alone. This kingdom will arise at the end of world history and, in one powerful stroke, smash all worldly power and bring the earth under God's sovereign control: "And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (v. 44).

Note that God's kingdom brings down the demise, not just of Rome, but of all the kingdoms before it. Considering Rome's size and scope, it is clear how this could happen. Working backwards, we recall that Rome swallowed Greece, which swallowed Medo-Persia, which swallowed Babylon. Thus, when the kingdom of God brings down Rome - which the book prophesies will be revived in the future as a confederation of modern nations - it will bring down the nations that once comprised ancient Greece, ancient Medo-Persia, and ancient Babylon, as well.

This will culminate at the battle of Armageddon.

But what of the feet that are partly iron and partly clay? Daniel's writes, "Where as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile" (v. 42).

Daniel is told that this refers to a version of the Roman Empire that is comprised of a federation of 10 kingdoms, some of which are strong and some of which are weak. More details about this confederation are given in subsequent dreams, where we see that, while the ancient form of the Roman Empire (the legs) has been fulfilled, this latter form made up of the 10-nation federation is yet to come.

God concludes His revelation by assuring Daniel, "The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure" (v. 45).

When seen in light of the 70 Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 (below), combined with the fact that Daniel's second, third, and fourth visions all refer to the empire of Rome as being in power immediately before Armageddon, it becomes clear why Christians are looking to "a revived Roman Empire." This is also why many people point to the European Union as being so key to end-times prophecy, since, two thousand years after the demise of ancient Rome, the E.U. is now comprised of countries that largely recreate Rome's occupied lands. Indeed, the E.U. is based on the "Treaty of Rome."

Daniel's First Dream

King Nebuchadnezzar's dream is an important framework for all end-times prophecy. This framework becomes more clear as we look beyond King Nebuchadnezzar's dream and investigate Daniel's series of end-times visions. These include two dreams and one visit by a heavenly being, who answers Daniel's question to God about what will be the end to his people Israel (Daniel 9:4-18).

In the first dream, Daniel saw four great beasts coming up from out of the "Great Sea," which many biblical scholars believe refers to the Mediterranean Sea:

1. The first beast was like a lion, and it had eagle's wings (Daniel 7:4).

2. The second beast was like a bear. It was raised up on one side and had three ribs in its mouth (Daniel 7:5).
3. The third beast was like a leopard, which had four heads and four sets of wings (Daniel 7:6).
4. The fourth beast was "dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong." It had huge iron teeth, and it devoured everything. It made war with God's people and broke them into pieces.

Almost immediately, the parallels to King Nebuchadnezzar's dream are obvious. As in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel is told that the four beasts refer to four kingdoms (v. 23-27), and there can be little doubt that they are the same four described earlier. The lion refers to Babylon, the regal and majestic kingdom.

- The bear refers to Medo-Persia, which was stronger on one side than the other (the Medes were stronger than the Persians).
- The third beast, the leopard, refers to Greece, which swept across the world with rapid ferocity under Alexander the Great, then divided into four kingdoms (the leopard's four heads) after Alexander's death.
- The fourth kingdom is Rome, which is again pictured as a cruel and fierce iron monster.

In this vision, however, we are given the additional details about the fourth kingdom. We are told that it will severely persecute God's people to the point of death and, as a race, almost to the point of annihilation. This is exactly what we see in the annals of history. Rome's persecution and oppression of Israel during the first century was merciless, and its destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 resulted in the massacre of more than one million Jews. The Roman Empire also comprised what would eventually become World War II Germany, which under the rule of Adolph Hitler would slaughter six million Jews.

This dream also takes a closer look at the future manifestation of Rome, which is pictured here as being comprised of ten horns, or nations, corresponding with the ten toes of iron and clay from King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Then, according to the prophecy, another horn, a little horn, comes up from among the ten. This little horn plucks three of the other horns out by the roots. "And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words" (Daniel 7:7-8).

This takes the 10-nation confederation of the revived Roman Empire and puts a human face on it. Of the 10 leaders of those 10 nations, there will be one who comes up from among them and stands out from the others. His ambition for power will cause the demise of three of them.

As in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel's first dream concludes with a vision of God on the fiery day of judgment. The heavenly court comes into session, the books are opened, and God's judgment falls. The little horn, or the arrogant leader from the Revived Roman Empire, is slain and his body is thrown into the fire of eternal judgment:

"And behold, One like the Son of Man [the biblical term for the Messiah], coming with the clouds of heaven.½ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).

Fulfillment of Daniel's First Dream Yet to Come

The persecution of the Jewish people was fulfilled, in part, in the first century during Rome's oppression of Israel. However, just as the prophecy of the 10 toes (kingdoms) from King Nebuchadnezzar's dream awaits fulfillment in the future, the worst of Rome's persecution of Israel is also future. The Bible calls this time of persecution "Jacob's Trouble," or "the Great Tribulation," and it will be of greater ferocity than ever seen in history. It will be greater than the Roman persecution in the first century and, tragically, even greater than the Holocaust.

Of this time, Jesus said, "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight [from this leader and his bloodbath] may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved" (Matthew 24:19-22).

We are given many more details about this terrible period throughout the Bible (Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 12:1, Matthew 24:21, Revelation 6:9-11).

Daniel is also given many more details about the future 10-nation confederation. It will be exceedingly powerful and completely overcome the people of God. God tells Daniel that the little horn will be arrogant, pompous, and cruel. He will magnify himself against God and will persecute the people of God mercilessly until God Himself comes to save them (v. 22).

This ruler will not be allowed to have dominion indefinitely. As in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel's dream foretells that the fourth kingdom's dominion will be cut short by God's sovereign hand and that the kingdom of God will be established throughout the earth. At this time, God's judgment will be poured out, culminating in the battle of Armageddon. The kingdom will be wrenched from this wicked ruler's grasp and he will be sent into eternal damnation.

The little horn also plays a key role in New Testament prophecy, where he is called "the Antichrist" and "the beast" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10, 1 John 2:18, Revelation 13:1-9). Although the Christian Church did not exist at the time of Daniel, the New Testament records that the Antichrist's persecution will extend beyond the Jewish people to include the Church (Matthew 15:21, 1 Peter 4:12-13, Revelation 3:10, Revelation 13:7), which has been grafted into Israel through faith in Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ (Romans 11:25). The Antichrist also plays the central role in the book of Revelation.

Building Up to Armageddon

Sometime later, Daniel has a second dream, and this dream gives us even more detail about the reign of the Antichrist (Daniel 8:17). In this dream, Daniel sees a ram, representing Medo-Persia, which has two horns (two kings). A goat, representing Greece, attacks the ram with such ferocity that it breaks off both horns. The ram is subdued, and as the goat grows, its single horn (one king) is broken and replaced by four horns (four kings). However, one of these horns grows much faster and greater than the other three (Daniel 8:3-14).

By now, it becomes clear that this little horn is the same little horn from Greece, as in the earlier dream, which plucks the other three horns (kings) out by their roots. Indeed, this little horn grows ever more powerful and comes down against the people of God in the Holy Land. Here, we see overlap with Daniel's first dream of the four beasts, and as in the first dream, the little horn exalts himself against God and begins to persecute God's people. But in this dream, we see that he also takes away the sacrifices from the temple in Jerusalem and that the sanctuary of God will be "cast down." We also see this description in Daniel 11:31 and Matthew 24:15.

Yet, for a time, God allows the little horn to prosper because of Israel's long history of transgressing against God, forsaking the covenant He established with Moses and serving other gods: "*Because of the transgression*, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered" (Daniel 8:12).

A heavenly visitor, who provides the interpretation of the dream, then identifies the little horn as arising in "the latter days" and at "the time of the end." He also describes Israel's future period of tribulation as being "in the latter time of the indignation" (v. 19).

We are then given one of the most detailed and horrifying descriptions of the Antichrist in the Bible:

"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. He shall destroy fearfully. And shall prosper and thrive. He shall destroy the mighty and also the holy people. Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes [the Messiah]. But he shall be broken without human means."

The fact that the little horn will be broken "without human means" closely parallels King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in which the fourth kingdom (Rome) is destroyed by a stone "cut out of the mountain without hands" (thus, when the Apostle Paul referred to Jesus Christ as the "chief cornerstone" in Ephesians 2:20, the symbolism was very clear); and Daniel's first dream, in which the fourth beast (Rome), will be broken, "not by human hands," but by God Himself.

It is also worth noting that Daniel is told that this evil leader prospers, "not by his own power." In 2 Thessalonians 2:9 and Revelation 13:2, we are told that the Antichrist receives his power from Satan himself.⁵

But how can the fulfillment of this vision be in the future, as it tells us in v. 23, if the kingdom of Greece was overthrown by the Roman Empire? In antiquity, it was. But today, the four ancient "kingdoms" of Greece - Macedonia, Egypt, Syria, and Thrace - exist as the modern-day nations of Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Although no longer world empires, these four "heads," or in Daniel's second dream, "horns," are once again nations in their own right. Thus, as biblical prophecy implies, the Roman Empire will be "reborn" as a confederation of strong and weak nations at the time of the end, and the Antichrist will be both from one of kingdoms of Greece and, at the same time, be part of the revived Roman Empire.

The 70 Weeks Prophecy

When will all of this occur? And how does it relate to the end-time prophecies of the New Testament?

For this, one must understand the final end-times prophecy given in the book of Daniel, the 70 Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). In this prophecy, Daniel is told that God has determined 70 Weeks, or periods of seven years, to bring the world to Armageddon: "70 Weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (Daniel 9:27).

This period of 70 Weeks, or 490 years, is broken into two parts: a period of 483 years, which concluded with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in A.D. 33; and one, final seven-year period that leads up to Armageddon. This is where Christians get the seven-year "tribulation period," which is more accurately called "the 70th Week of Daniel":

This final, seven-year period will begin when the Antichrist signs a seven-year treaty with Israel. In fact, the revealing of the Antichrist's identity, the final merciless persecution of the Jews and Christians during the Great Tribulation, and the return of the Messiah all occur during this last seven-year period. The entire book of Revelation is devoted to the details of this terrifying time.

This is why the Christian world is watching so closely what is going on in Israel right now. They are watching for a world leader who will sign a treaty with Israel for the precise period of seven years. When he signs this treaty, they will know that the Antichrist has arrived. At the end of these seven years, God Almighty will arrive in the sky and bring an end to the rule of man and usher in the long-awaited earthly kingdom of God.

The Arrival of the Messiah

Compare the descriptions of the arrival of the Messiah in Daniel 2, 7, and 8 with the description given in the New Testament:

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:11-13).

Just as recorded in Daniel 7, this is followed by the Messiah's conquest of the Antichrist, who is thrown into the lake of fire. Compare the two descriptions:

"I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7:11).

"Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophets. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20).

At this time, the 70th Week will be concluded. For Israel, this will be a time of joy, for the scriptures tell us that the Israelites who are left after the judgment of God will return wholeheartedly to the worship of their king (Zech. 13:8, Ezekiel 36:20, Romans 11:26). Thus, the temple will be cleansed and Jesus will rule and reign over His kingdom, accompanied by Old Testament saints and New Testament believers who have been born again under the New Covenant by the blood of Christ.

This is also why the Christian world is closely watching for the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. According to Daniel's prophecies, the Antichrist will stand in this temple and declare himself to be God, or as God (Daniel 8:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:4), and bring an end to the sacrifices (Daniel 11:31, Matthew 24:15). For this to occur, the temple must be rebuilt. And indeed, efforts are already in progress.

Final Pieces of the Enigma

Where is the Christian Church during all of this? The book of Daniel was written before the mystery of the Church was revealed (Romans 11:25); thus, we should not expect to see the Church mentioned in these prophecies. However, we know from the plethora of references in the New Testament to the fiery trial that will come upon the Church immediately before the Second Coming of the Messiah, as well as the clear timing revealed in the New Testament scriptures, that the Church will also undergo the testing and refinement of the Great Tribulation (1 Peter 4:12-17, Revelation 3:10, Revelation 12:17).

There is a difference, however. Unlike unbelieving Israel, the Church - which is composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Israel's Messiah - will be delivered before the final outpouring of the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 5:9), since the Church is not part of the transgression or the indignation (Daniel 8:12, 19, Daniel 9:24-27). This deliverance will come at the bodily return of Jesus Christ just after the midpoint of the 70th Week.

Here is the exciting part for believers. At the height of the Antichrist's persecution, Jesus will come in the clouds, snatch up His children, and take them to safety in heaven (Matthew 24:30-31, John 14:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, 1 Corinthians. 15:52) while the rest of the world watches in wonder:

"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain [after the Great Tribulation] until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

This is what is commonly called "the rapture of the Church," and has been the subject of many books and movies, including the popular *Left Behind* book series and movie by the same name.

Thus, Daniel, while written more than 2,600 years ago, is a very current book. Its prophecies span centuries, yet they are unnervingly accurate. And we can be assured that, as accurately as they were fulfilled in the past, those prophecies yet to come will be just as precisely fulfilled. This is why we must waste no precious time in getting to know our Messiah, the soon returning King, Jesus Christ, who at His first coming was the Suffering Servant, but in His Second Coming, will be the Lion of the Tribe of Judah -the King of kings, who will rule and reign forever.

Important Notes and References

1. Ironically, it was the Romans who invented the punishment of crucifixion, a slow and excruciatingly painful death in which the condemned was first tortured with whips and scourges, then nailed to a cross of rough hewn wood with iron spikes through the wrists and feet. It was this form of torture that killed Jesus Christ in the first century.
2. The fact that those prophecies were fulfilled so precisely has caused some scholars to question whether they were really written in the sixth century B.C., as the book claims. However, we have the witness of the author himself (Daniel 12:4), which is considered to be strong evidence in ancient writings. Mainstream biblical scholars further attest that 1) the accuracy of the book's historical information, 2) the form and style of its Hebrew and Aramaic passages, and 3) the unanimous testimony of ancient tradition all confirm that the book was written, as it claims, by

Daniel while living in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar (Nelson Study Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, c. 1997, p. 1416).

3. Not all prophecy scholars accept this interpretation. By tracing the lineage of Noah's sons Ham, Shem, and Japheth from Genesis 10, Robert Van Kampen has developed a theory that the eighth and final beast empire of Satan, the 10-nation confederacy of Revelation, will be entirely of Japhethic decent (from the line of Japheth). He argues strongly that this beast empire, which will be led by the Antichrist, must be determined by ancestry, not geographic location. According to this line of reasoning, the "people of the prince who is to come" are Germanic/Russian, since this is the ancestry of the peoples who formed the power base of ancient Rome (*The Sign*, Ibid., pp. 117, 141).
4. Despite the common belief throughout the Jewish community that Jesus is "the Gentile's Messiah," Jesus, a Nazarite Jew, fulfilled every prophecy regarding the Messiah. He was from the tribe of Judah, of the lineage of David, born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, was preceded by the "voice crying in the wilderness" (John the Baptist), and in the time of His ministry healed the sick, lame, and blind as the Old Testament prophets declared. He then died the death described in Isaiah 53 and became the Passover Lamb, the perfect sacrifice for mankind's sins. Although Jesus, Himself, declared that His ministry was first to "the lost tribes of Israel," after Israel's rejection of Him, Jesus gave instructions to His disciples, all of whom were Jews, to take the gospel to the Gentiles, fulfilling Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 60:3.
5. Indeed, it is Satan who inspired all four kingdoms and gave them their power to persecute God's people. This is why Revelation 13:2 describes Satan as a beast rising up out of the sea (cf. Daniel 7:3), with the body of a leopard (Daniel 7:6). The feet of a bear (Daniel 7:5), and the mouth of a lion (Daniel 7:4). Not only does Satan give the Antichrist his power, but he is also the power behind all four of the beast kingdoms, which have tried to stamp out God's people throughout history.
6. Many believe that, in order for this to occur, the Muslim Dome of the Rock must be destroyed. This is not necessarily the case, since the original temple site may exist about 150 yard south of the Dome of the Rock, allowing for ample space for the temple to be rebuilt without disturbing this Muslim site.

Conclusion

This dramatic prophecy features certain things in very clear and unmistakable terms. First, the Messiah was to be on earth 483 years after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Secondly, after his appearance on earth he was to be killed, not for

his own sins, but rather for those of others; and the death he would die was to be the death of the penalty of the law. Thirdly, the death of the Messiah had to come sometime before Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed again, which occurred in the year 70 C. E. Fourthly, some time after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and following a long period of warfare, the 70th seven will commence, and once that has run its course, Messiah's kingdom and age of righteousness will be established. For that to occur, the implication is that the Messiah who was killed would return again.

But who is this Messiah? One man fulfills all that is required in this passage. Jesus of Nazareth was born into the Jewish world and proclaimed his messiahship 483 years after the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem was issued. In the year 30 C. E., Jesus was executed by crucifixion. Daniel indicated that he would be cut off, not for himself, but rather for others. Isaiah 53 also prophesied the death of the Messiah, pointing out that he would die a substitutionary death on behalf of his people Israel. The teaching of the New Covenant is that Jesus died a penal death by taking upon himself the penalty of the Law as a substitute for his people. In keeping with Daniel 9:24, he died for the purpose of making an atonement for sins. Three days after his death, he was resurrected. Finally, the New Covenant proclaims the fact that he will someday return to set up his kingdom and the age of righteousness.

If Daniel was right, then Messiah came and died prior to the year 70 C.E. If Daniel was right, then there are no other options for who the Messiah is, but Jesus of Nazareth. If Daniel was right, this Jesus is destined to return and to set up the messianic kingdom.



Archaeological light

Daniel's Tomb

This tomb is one of the sites that is reputed to be the Prophet Daniel's tomb. Muslim invaders decided to build a mosque here and while they were altering the building they found a splendid tomb containing the remains of a man wearing a ring. On the ring were some of the life events of Daniel. It is a place of pilgrimage to this day.

The tomb of the Prophet Daniel, is situated on the east bank of the river Shapour; immediately to the east rises the great mound of Susa. It is a building surmounted by a pineapple cone in white plaster and which is typical of Iran and also of Iraq. The Book of Daniel, the Prophet was closely associated with Susa during his lifetime; it was at Shushan the Palace that he had his vision of the ram with two horns, one of which was higher than the other. According to Islamic sources, the Arabs discovered the coffin containing the Prophet's remains in the castle of Susa when they occupied the city in the seventh century AD. On learning of this discovery, the Caliph Omar decreed that the river Sha'ur should be temporarily diverted and the coffin interred in the river bed; the stream was then to be allowed to resume its normal course. The inhabitants

of Susa and the surrounding district have no doubts as to the authenticity of the remains, which they regard as possessing remarkable curative properties, as well as the power to bring rain in time of draught.

Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Susa in 1165, has a different story to tell; he claims that he saw the coffin containing the Prophet's remains suspended by chains from the centre of a bridge over the river. It would appear that while the remains had been interred on the eastern side of the river, the inhabitants on that side had enjoyed such unparalleled prosperity that it aroused the envy and jealousy of those on the west side. Feelings rose so high that fighting almost broke out, but a compromise was reached whereby the remains were interred for a year, first on the west side and then on the east side, and so on. When the Seljuk ruler Sultan Sanjar (died in 1157 AD) heard of this arrangement, he decaled that it denoted a certain lack of respect for Daniel's memory, and gave orders for the coffin to be suspended from the center of the bridge, so that those on either bank could receive equal benefit.





Prayers and intercessions at the tomb of daniel

Commentary on the Book of Daniel

by Arno C. Gaebelein

Introduction

At the close of the history of Hezekiah, the noble king of Judah, as reported by the prophet Isaiah, is found a significant prophecy. Hezekiah, like so many other good men before and after him, had fallen into the crime of the devil, pride 1 Timothy 3:6, and the Lord through the prophet Isaiah announced therefore the future judgment upon the royal house of David: "Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day shall be carried to Babylon, nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said, moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days" Isaiah 39:6-8).

About one hundred years after this startling prophecy was literally fulfilled. The opening verses of the book of Daniel introduce us to this. The Babylonian king came and besieged the city of Jerusalem and conquered it. Among those carried away was Daniel and his companions. Daniel, as we learn from the third verse of the first chapter, was of princely descent.

This young man, the captive in Babylon, became, through the marvellous providence of God, one of the leading figures and prominent actors in the great Babylonian empire, under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He was made, in spite of his youth, a great man--the prime minister of Babylon.

Of his personal history, his character and remarkable experiences we know more than of any of the other prophets of God. As a mere lad he was brought to the strange land as a captive. We behold him and his companions, true to Jehovah, maintaining their God-given place of separation. He honored Jehovah and Jehovah honored him. Soon the Lord used the young captive by revealing unto him the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the interpretation of the dream. Then followed the exaltation of the obscure captive; and afterwards he seemed to have been the close companion of the great Gentile monarch, who acknowledged finally the Lord-God of Israel as his God. Then God honored him by giving him the great visions of the future, so remarkable in their scope. The Lord appeared unto him; he talked with angels, and the messenger Gabriel addressed him as "the man greatly beloved." As an old man he had been quite forgotten during the reign of the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar; only the queen mother, the aged wife of Nebuchadnezzar, remembered him. In that memorable night when Babylon fell the old prophet interpreted the handwriting on the wall, though old in years, still young in his faith. Under the reign of Darius he was cast among the lions, on account of his devotion to Jehovah, and wonderfully delivered.

What a man of prayer he was we learn from the ninth chapter. He reached a very old age, continuing even into the reign of Cyrus, and when his great work was done, ere the Lord called him home, he received the promise: "But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of days" (Daniel 12:13). In the great faith chapter of the Hebrew Epistle his name is not mentioned, but his deeds are there. "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" Hebrews 11:33.

The Authenticity of Daniel

Perhaps no other book of the Bible has been so much attacked as the book of Daniel. It is a veritable battlefield between faith and unbelief. For about 2,000 years, wicked men, heathen philosophers and infidels have hammered away against it; but the book has proved to be the anvil upon which the critics' hammers have been broken into pieces. The book has survived all attacks, and we need not fear that the weak and puerile critics, the most subtle infidels of Christendom in our day, can harm the book. It has been denied that Daniel wrote the book during the Babylonian captivity. Kuenen and Wellhausen and their imitating disciples like Canon Farrar, Driver and others of inferior calibre, claim that the work was not written in the Exile, but centuries later. Daniel had nothing to do with the book at all; a holy and gifted Jew wrote it instead, and it is avowed fiction. Such are a few of the infidel statements made against this sublime book. These critics follow the wicked assailant of Christianity of the third century, Porphyry, who contended that the book of Daniel is a forgery, that it was written during the time of the Maccabees, after Antiochus Epiphanes, so clearly foretold in this book, had appeared. The whole reasoning method of the destructive Bible-criticism may be reduced to the following. Prophecy is an impossibility, there is no such thing as foretelling events to come. Therefore a book which contains predictions must have been written after the events which are predicted. But how could the man who committed such a forgery be a pious Jew? No, the book of Daniel is either divine or it is the most colossal forgery and fraud. No middle ground is possible.

We give a few of the evidences which answer the infidel attacks upon this great fundamental prophetic book.

It should be enough for every Christian that our Lord, the infallible Son of God, mentions Daniel by name in His great prophetic discourse delivered on Olivet Matthew 24:15. There can be no question that our Lord at least twice more referred to the book of Daniel. When He speaks of Himself and His coming again in the clouds of heaven as the Son of Man, He confirms Daniel's vision in Daniel 7:13, and when He speaks of the stone to fall in Matthew 21:44, He confirms Daniel 2:44-45. How does the critic meet this argument? He tells us that our Lord accommodated Himself to the Jewish views current in His day. They say, perhaps He knew better, and some say that He did not know. In other words, they deny the infallibility of our Lord, and with this invention that He accommodated Himself against His better knowledge, they accuse our Lord of something worse. When the Lord uttered the words, "Daniel the prophet" He put at once His unimpeachable seal on both the person and the book of Daniel.

But there are other evidences. The heathen Porphyry declared that the book was written during the days of the Maccabees; as stated above the modern critics have echoed the opinion of that lost heathen soul. But the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which was made before the time of the Maccabees, contains the book of Daniel. It was in the hands of the learned Hebrews, who translated in the third century before Christ the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek. The book therefore antedates the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Furthermore during the days of the Maccabees a book was written, the first book of the Maccabees, a historical account of those eventful days. This Maccabean work not only presupposes the existence of the book of Daniel, but shows actual acquaintance with it, and therefore gives proof that the book must have been written long before that period 1 Maccabees 1:54, compare with Daniel 9:27; Daniel 2:49 and Daniel 3:1-30.

The reliable Jewish historian Josephus also furnisheth historically an evidence for Daniel. He tells us that when Alexander the Great, who is mentioned in Daniel's prophecy (chapter 8), came to Jerusalem in the year 332 B.C., Jaddua the high priest, showed him the prophecies of Daniel, and Alexander was greatly impressed with them.

Then we have the testimony of another prophet of the exile, the prophet Ezekiel. He speaks twice in the highest terms of Daniel, whose contemporary he was. (See Ezekiel 14:14-20; Ezekiel 28:3.) Daniel also betrays such an intimate acquaintance with Chaldean customs and history, as well as their religion, such as none but one who lived there and was an eye-witness could have possessed. For instance, the description of the Chaldean magicians perfectly agrees with the accounts found in other sources. The account of the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar is confirmed by the ancient historian Berosus.

Then there has been a most striking vindication of this book through the Babylonian excavations, tablets, cylinders and monuments. Into this we cannot fully enter, but we cite but one of the most striking.

The name of Belshazzar furnished for a long time material to the infidels to reject the historical accuracy of the book. The father of Belshazzar was Nabonaid, who was not a son of Nebuchadnezzar at all. How then could Belshazzar be a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar? This objection is seemingly strengthened by the fact that no ancient historians include in the list of Babylonian kings the name of Belshazzar.

Berosus, who lived about 250 years after the Persian invasion, gives the following list of Babylonian monarchs: Nabuchodonosar (Nebuchadnezzar). Evil Marudak, who is the Evil Merodach of the Bible. Neriglissor. Laborosoarchod. Nabonaid. Cyrus, the Persian conqueror.

Different attempts were made to clear up this difficulty, but they failed. Now, if Daniel wrote his book he must be correct. But the critics are ever ready to put the doubt not on the side of history, but on the side of the Bible. So they said Berosus was not mistaken and that if Daniel really had written the book which bears his name he would have been historically correct. This is how matters stood up to 1854. In that year Sir Rawlinson translated a number of tablets brought to light by the spade from the ruins of the Babylonian civilization. These contained the memorials of Nabonaid, and in these the name of Bil-shar-uzzar appeared frequently, and is mentioned as the son of Nabonaid and sharing the government with him. The existence of Belshazzar and the accuracy of Daniel were at once established beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Daniel was promised by Belshazzar to become the third ruler in the kingdom Daniel 5:16.

Why the third and not the second? Because Nabonaid was the first, Belshazzar his son was the second and vice-regent. Nabonaid had a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar for wife and therefore Belshazzar from his mother's side was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

But have the critics learned by this complete defeat? Have they profited by this experience and will they leave the Bible alone? Not by any means. They will continue to look for flaws in the infallible Book. Some day they will discover the seriousness of their work.

The Important Prophetic Message of Daniel

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the book of Daniel. It is the key to all prophecy; without a knowledge of the great prophecies contained in this book the entire prophetic portion of the word of God must remain a sealed book. One of the reasons why so few Christians have a correct knowledge of the prophetic forecast in the Bible is the neglect of the book of Daniel. The great prophetic portions of the New Testament, the Olivet discourse of our Lord Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-46), and above all the great New Testament book of prophecy, the book of Revelation, can only be understood through the prophecies of Daniel.

To both, the Babylonian king and God's prophet, were revealed the political history of the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24-28). The rise and fall of the great monarchies, Babylonia, Medo-Persian, Graeco-Macedonia and the Roman, are successively revealed in this book. The appointed end of these times and what will follow the times of the Gentiles is made known. Our generation lives in the very shadow of that end. Then there are prophecies relating more specifically to Jerusalem and the Jewish people, showing what will yet come for that city and the nation.

It will be impossible in our brief annotations to do justice to all the details of this prophetic book. The larger work on the prophet Daniel by the author of The Annotated Bible should be carefully studied with the accompanying pages.

The Division of Daniel

The book of Daniel is written in two languages, in the Hebrew and in the Aramaic, the language of Chaldea. The first chapter is written in Hebrew, in style closely allied to the Hebrew used in the book of Ezekiel. Chapters 8-12 are likewise written in the Hebrew language. But chapters 2:4-7:28 are written in the Aramaic language. This gives an additional argument for the authenticity of the book. The author was conversant with both languages, an attainment exactly suited to a Hebrew living in exile, but not in the least so to an author in the Maccabean age, when the Hebrew had long since ceased to be a living language, and had been supplanted by the Aramaic vernacular dialect. Daniel was led to employ both languages for a specific reason. What concerned these great monarchies, Babylonia and Medo-Persia, was written in the language with which they were familiar. What concerned the Jewish people was written for them in Hebrew. We shall not follow the linguistic division of the book. We find in the book two main sections:

I. DANIEL IN BABYLON, NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM, AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

Chapter 1. Daniel and His Companions in Babylon

Chapter 2. The Great Prophetic Dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter 3-6. Historical Events

II. THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

Chapter 7. The Night Visions of Daniel

Chapter 8. The Vision of the Ram and the He-Goat

Chapter 9. The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

Chapter 10. Preparation for the Final Prophecy

Chapter 11. The Wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae Predicted and the
Coming Events of the End

Chapter 12. The Great Tribulation and Israel's Deliverance



The Palace of Darius, Persepolis

I. DANIEL IN BABYLON, NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM, AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

Chapter 1

Daniel the man, his character and His Companions in Babylon

1. The introduction (Daniel 1:1-2)

2. *The king's command* (Daniel 1:3-5)

3. *Daniel and his companions* (Daniel 1:6-21)

Verses 1-2. Beginning of Judah's exile

Daniel 1:1-2. Divine judgment, which had threatened so long, had finally fallen upon Jerusalem. It was executed by the divinely chosen instrument, Nebuchadnezzar. Three times he came against Jerusalem. In 606 B.C. he appeared the first time. This is the visitation mentioned here. In 598 he came again and carried away more captives, including Ezekiel. In 587 he burned the city and the temple.

Verses 3-21. Daniel's great moral decision

Daniel 1:3-5. As already stated in the introduction the young captives of the king's seed and of the princes (both of Judah) was in fulfillment of prophecy. They were to be added to the king's court and to receive special royal favors, instructions in the wisdom and language of the Chaldeans and have the privileges of the king's table.

Daniel 1:6-21. Daniel means, "God is my judge"; Hananiah, "Beloved of the Lord"; Mishael, "Who is as God"; Azariah, "The Lord is my help." These beautiful names were soon changed into names of heathen meaning, to blot out the very memory of Jehovah. Daniel becomes Belteshazzar (Bel's prince); Hananiah is named Shadrach (illuminated by the sun-god); Mishael is called Meshach (who is like Shach-- Venus); and Azariah is changed to Abednego (the servant of Nego).

The purpose of the four expressed their loyalty to the God of their fathers and their obedience to His law. The Lord rewarded them for their loyalty and faithfulness, as He is still the rewarder of all who trust in Him and walk in separation.

The language of Daniel

The Book of Daniel is unique in that it contains sections written in Hebrew and others in Aramaic. Aramaic, a Semitic language similar to Hebrew, was the lingua franca of the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires and during the period became the common language of the Jews. Daniel 2:4-7:24, a section relating to the Gentiles, quite naturally appears in Aramaic, though it is not known whether Daniel wrote the section in Aramaic or whether it was later translated.

Chapter 2

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, colossus vision and Its Interpretation

1. *The forgotten dream* (Daniel 2:1-13)
2. *The prayer meeting in Babylon and the answer* (Daniel 2:14-23)
3. *Daniel before the king* (Daniel 2:24-28)
4. *The revelation and interpretation of the dream* (Daniel 2:29-45)
5. *The promotion of Daniel and his companions* (Daniel 2:46-49)

Verses 1-28. The forgotten dream

Daniel 2:1-13. The king had a dream which was occasioned by thinking concerning the future (Daniel 2:29). God answered his desire by this dream, which made a great impression on him. But he had forgotten the dream. The soothsayers, wise men and magicians, who were kept by him to interpret dreams, were unable to reveal the forgotten dream: they confessed their utter helplessness. The king condemned them to death. Inasmuch as Daniel and his companions were counted among the wise men, “they sought Daniel and his companions to be slain.”

Daniel 2:14-23. And now Daniel steps to the front. But there is no haste and no hurry connected with it, for “He that believeth shall not make haste.” He is brought before the king and promises to the king the meaning of that dream. It was the language of faith; he had confidence in God. He knew that the same Jehovah who had given another captive wisdom, Joseph in Egypt, was his God also. Then there was a prayer meeting in Babylon. While the condemned wise men, the astrologers and magicians trembled for fear of death, Daniel and his companions asked “mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret.” The prayer was speedily answered.

Daniel 2:24-28. After Daniel had praised the God of heaven he requested an audience with the king. How beautiful he is in the presence of the mighty monarch! What an opportunity to glorify himself. But he hides himself completely and gives God all the glory. Then he tells the king that in the dream he is about to relate God has made known unto him “what shall be in the latter days.”

Verses 29-45. The revelation and interpretation of the dream

Daniel 2:29-45. Daniel then told to the king the forgotten dream:

Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:31-35).

The great man image is the prophetic symbol of the "times of the Gentiles." This expression "The times of the Gentiles" is not found in the book of Daniel, but it is a New Testament phrase. Our Lord used it exclusively. In that part of His prophetic discourse which is reported in the Gospel of Luke and which relates to the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation, our Lord said: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" Luke 21:24. Now, the times of the Gentiles did not begin when Jerusalem rejected the Lord from heaven. Our Lord does not say that the times of the Gentiles were then ushered in. The times of the Gentiles started with the Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. The glory of the Lord departed from Jerusalem. The other great prophet of the captivity, Ezekiel, beheld the departure of the Shekinah. "Then did the Cherubim lift up their Wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" Ezekiel 11:22-25. But before that Jeremiah recorded a remarkable word. These are the words of Jehovah concerning Nebuchadnezzar:

I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto Me. And now have I given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of

Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand Jeremiah 27:5-22.

Jerusalem had been supreme because the throne and the glory of Jehovah was there. Though Assyria, Egypt and Babylon had tried repeatedly to overthrow Jerusalem, they were held in check by the power of God and divine intervention, but when the measure of the wickedness of Jerusalem was full, Nebuchadnezzar was chosen to become the first great monarch of the times of the Gentiles. The dominion was then taken away from Jerusalem and transferred to the Gentiles.

Therefore the golden head in this prophetic man-image represents Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. The chest of silver, according to divine interpretation, stands for an inferior monarchy which was to follow the Babylonian empire. This second world empire is the Medo-Persian. The belly and thighs of brass represent the third great monarchy, the Graeco-Macedonian. The fourth great monarchy which was to rise during the times of the Gentiles, represented by the two legs of iron, is the iron empire, Rome. Here, then, is history pre-written. God, who knows the end from the beginning, revealed in this dream the course of the times of the Gentiles, beginning with the Babylonian monarchy and followed by three more: The Medo-Persian, the Graeco-Macedonian and the Roman. Notice the process of deterioration as indicated in the composition of this image: Gold, silver, brass, iron, and finally the iron getting less and clay taking a prominent place. It shows that politically the times of the Gentiles are not improving.

Everything which this image represents has been fulfilled, except the last portion, when a stone falls out of heaven and strikes the ten toes and the clay, so that the whole colossal figure goes to pieces, the different constituent metals become like the chaff on the summer threshingfloor and the striking stone becomes a mountain and fills the whole earth.

The fourth Empire, the Roman, has not yet fulfilled its history. The final form, and with it the final form of the times of the Gentiles is yet to pass into history. This final form is symbolically seen in the ten toes and the clay, in the feet of the image. The territory which constituted the now extinct Roman empire will in the near future undergo a political revival. It will reappear in a confederated Europe, except certain countries which never belonged to the Roman empire. In that confederacy will be kingdoms to the number of ten; the clay represents democracies, the rule by the people and for the people. The late great war has

brought such a political combination into our times. Such is the future and end of the times of the Gentiles, as foretold in the feet of the image.

But what does the smiting stone represent, the stone which abolisheth the image and becomes itself a great mountain filling the whole earth?

The Stone is Christ. That the stone represents Christ is seen from the Scriptures. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation" Isaiah 28:16. Zechariah speaks of this stone with seven eyes upon it and engraven. We read of Him in the New Testament as the foundation stone of the church, the cornerstone, the stone rejected by the builders. Most interesting is His own word in the Gospel of Matthew: "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" Matthew 21:44. Here we have Israel's sin and judgment and the fate of the Gentiles. Israel stumbled against this stone; for them He was a stumblingstone and rock of offense. In consequence they were broken as a nation. But the Gentile world, rejecting Him, will be broken when the stone falls. They will be ground to powder by the falling stone. Our Lord must have had the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in mind when he spake these words. The falling stone of which He speaks and the striking stone in the dream mean the same Person, Himself.

The stone doing its work in smiting the image is a prophecy of the second coming of our Lord. The mountain filling after that the earth foreshadows that kingdom which will be established with the return of Christ and His enthronement as King of kings.

Verses 46-49. Daniel's promotion

Daniel 2:46-49. The heathen monarch then acknowledged Daniel's God in a threefold way: The God of Gods (the Father); the Lord of Kings (God the Son); the Revealer of Secrets (God the Holy Spirit). Daniel is lifted from the place of humiliation to a place of exaltation. He did not forget his companions; they share honor and glory with him. It is a beautiful picture of that day when our Lord will receive the throne and when His own will not be left behind in sharing with Him His glory.

Historical Events (3-6)

The four chapters which follow the great dream of Nebuchadnezzar are of a historical character. They do not contain direct prophecies, but record certain events which transpired during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, his successor and grandson Belshazzar, and Darius, the Mede. On the personal history of these

three persons and where they are found in profane history we have little to say, as a deeper examination of this subject would lead us too far and would be tedious. But this much must be said that the criticism which charged Daniel with being incorrect has been completely silenced by the Babylonian cylinders of Cyrus and Nabonaid and the so-called annalistic tablets, the very records of those days. It is true the personality of Darius the Mede has not yet been definitely located historically. However, we do not believe the Bible because its historical statements can be verified from profane history. We believe the Bible because its records are divinely inspired and therefore correct. What would we know of the genuineness of these ancient tablets and cylinders covered with cuneiform inscriptions if it were not for the Bible? These witnesses from the stones, which indeed cry out, do not verify the Bible, they are rather declared genuine and correct by the Word of God.

These four chapters then give us historical events. Each has a prophetic meaning, though direct prophecy is not found in them.

These chapters describe the moral conditions which held sway during the two first world empires; they indicate prophetically the moral conditions which continue to the end of the times of the Gentiles. Five things may be traced in these four chapters: The moral characteristics of the times of the Gentiles; what will happen at the close of these times; the faithful remnant in suffering; their deliverance and the Gentiles acknowledging God, as King and the God of heaven.

Chapter 3

The fiery furnace and the Image of Gold

- 1. The image of gold (Daniel 3:1-7)*
- 2. The faithful three (Daniel 3:8-18)*
- 3. The miraculous deliverance (Daniel 3:19-25)*
- 4. The worshipping king (Daniel 3:26-30)*

Verses 1-7. The image of gold

Daniel 3:1-7. He had an immense statue of gold made, the image of a man, no doubt, and he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. It was idolatry and the deification of man. Idolatry and the deification of man are then the first moral characteristics mentioned which are to prevail during the times of

the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles produce a religion which is opposed to the God of heaven. The image was sixty cubits high and six broad. Seven is the divine number and six is the number of man. Sixty cubits and six reminds us of that familiar passage in the book of Revelation, where we have the number of a man given, that mysterious number “six hundred three-score and six,” that is 666. The image then represents man, but the climax of man was not yet reached. However, the beginning foreshadows the end of the times of the Gentiles. That end is described in chapter 13 of Revelation.

The civil power tried to force this universal religion upon the people. The great governors, judges, captains and rulers had to appear for the dedication of the image. But then the whole thing had a religious aspect. Listen, after looking at this great awe-inspiring image of gold-- the sweetest music--the cornet, the flute, the harp, the sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music sounds forth. No doubt the Chaldean priests approached chanting some sweet Babylonian song. Why all this? To stir up the religious emotions and aid in this way the worship of an idol. It is intensely interesting that the ancient Babylonian worship, with its ceremonials and chanting is reproduced in Rome, which is called in Revelation, Babylon. (The book by Alexander Hyslop, *The Two Babylons*, gives reliable and important information on this fact.)

Verses 8-25. The faithful three and their deliverance

Daniel 3:8-18. The companions of Daniel refused to worship the image and were cast into the fiery furnace. Notice their wonderful trust in God.

Daniel 3:19-25. The very men who cast them down were consumed by the flames. But when the king looked towards the furnace he beheld to his great astonishment not three men bound and burning up, but four men loose and actually walking in the fire. “They have no hurt and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” And when they brought up from the fiery furnace, no smell of fire was about them, not even a hair was singed, only the bands which had bound them were burned off. The fire had set them free but it could not touch them. But did the king speak true when he beheld the fourth like the Son of God? Little did he know what he said or what it meant, but assuredly he saw in that fire the Son of God, Jehovah, for He had promised His people, “When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on thee.” The faithful Lord kept His promise to His trusting servants.

And has not all this been repeated throughout the times of the Gentiles especially during the Roman Empire? Pagan Rome persecuted the true worshippers of God and in great persecutions multitudes suffered martyrdom.

But think of what is worse, Papal Rome, that Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots. There we find the images and the sweet music, the prostrations and political power enforcing unity of worship. The fiery furnaces were there, the stake, the most awful tortures for those who were faithful to God and to their Lord. Think of the story of the Waldensians and Huguenots. And while for these noble martyrs, for whom there is a martyr's crown in the coming day of Christ, there came no deliverance and their bodies were consumed by the fire, yet the Son of God was with them and with praising hearts and a song upon their lips, He carried them through the fire.

And during the great tribulation will a faithful remnant of Jews suffer under the man of sin, as these three Hebrews suffered; but they will likewise be delivered.

Verses 26-30. The king's confession and decree

Daniel 3:26-30. Once more Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God and made a decree that severe punishment should be the lot of all who say anything amiss against the God of Daniel's companions.

Chapter 4

The Tree Vision of Nebuchadnezzar and his insanity

- 1. The king's proclamation (Daniel 4:1-3)*
- 2. The king relates the tree vision (Daniel 4:4-18)*
- 3. Daniel interprets the vision (Daniel 4:19-27)*
- 4. The tree vision fulfilled, the king's abasement and his restoration, (Daniel 4:28-37)*

Verses 1-3. The king's salutation

Daniel 4:1-3. This chapter is in form, at least in part, of a proclamation. This proclamation must have been written after the king had passed through the experience recorded in this chapter.

Verses 4-27. The tree vision and its interpretation

Daniel 4:4-18. Read carefully the vision the king had and compare with Ezekiel 31:3 and Matthew 13:1-58, the parable of the mustard seed. In each case the great big tree is the symbol of pride and self-exaltation.

Daniel 4:19-27. The prophet's interpretation of this dream needs no further comment. A careful reading will make it clear in its meaning.

Verses 28-37. The vision fulfilled

Daniel 4:28-37. Twelve months later he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. Then with a haughty mien he utters the fatal words: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty." Notice the personal pronoun. But while he yet uttered these words a heavenly voice was heard which announced that the kingdom is departed from him. What Daniel had said in his interpretation is repeated from heaven. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar and he was driven from men and did eat grass as the oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And after the seven times had passed over him his understanding returned unto him and he blessed the Most High.

The great characteristic here is pride and self exaltation. As judgment came upon the great monarch in the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, so judgment will yet fall upon this proud and self exalting age of the Gentiles. That great big, political and religious tree will some day be hewn down and be destroyed.

And Nebuchadnezzar's great humiliation in becoming a beast for seven times (seven years), points us to the end of this Gentile age once more. (The attempt to ascertain from this "seven times" the length of the times of the Gentiles as some do lacks the support of Scripture. The seven times mean seven years.) Apostasy from God will be the great characteristic of that end. There will be no more looking up to God, but the attitude of the beast will be the attitude of the nations. We see much of this already. They mind earthly things and become the "earth dwellers" so frequently mentioned in the book of Revelation. Madness and bestiality will seize upon the Gentiles, after the One who hinders, the Holy Spirit is removed. Then proud and apostate Christendom will believe the lie and follow the beast with its lying wonders. This will last seven times, that is, seven years.

The stump of the great tree which remains in the field suggests the fact that the judgments which fall upon the nations in the time of the end will not completely destroy all nations. Many of them will be swept away. For those who wilfully rejected the gospel and turned away from the truth, there is no hope. But there are others which will be left and when these judgments are in the earth, the nations learn righteousness.

The millennium is also seen in this chapter in the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar and in the praise He gives to the Most High. In the previous chapter the three friends of Daniel speak of “our God,” but in this chapter we hear of “the Most High.” It is the millennial name of God. We see then in the fourth chapter the pride and self exaltation of the Gentiles, and how the Gentiles will be humiliated and judged. First there is self exaltation, that is followed by judgment, and then follows restoration and the acknowledgement of the Most High.

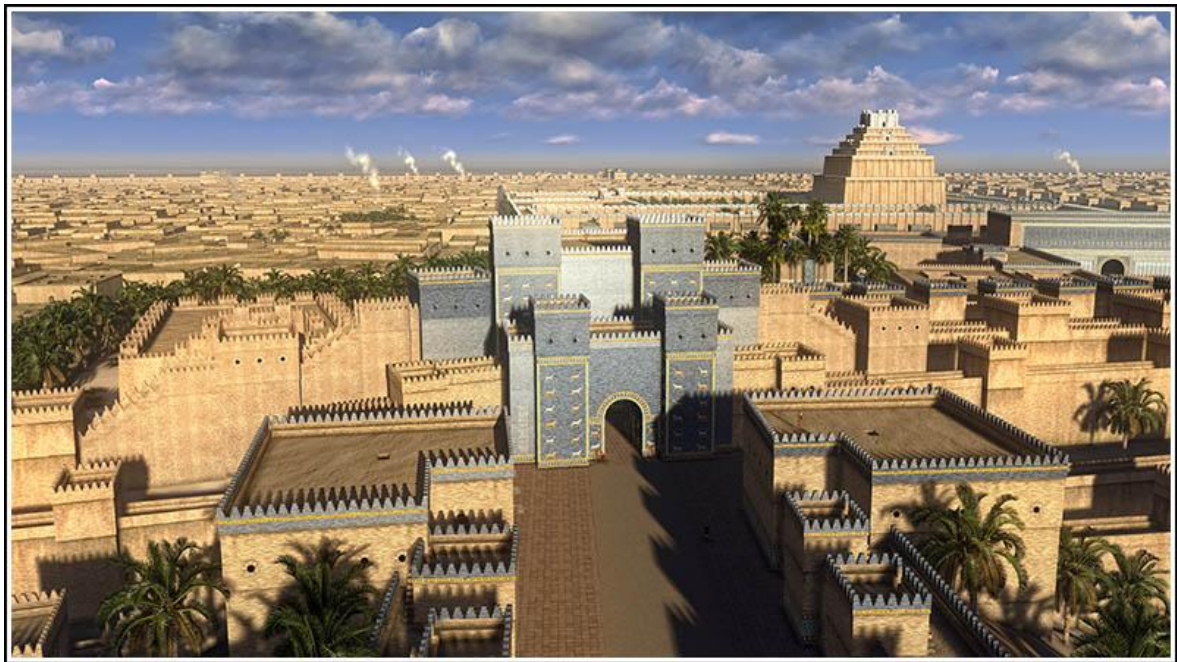
That nothing more is now reported of Nebuchadnezzar, that the last which we hear of him in Scripture is his acknowledgment of the Most High, is also not without meaning. It foreshadows the universal acknowledgment of God in the kingdom which the God of heaven will set up, when the stone fills as the mountain the whole earth.



The Ninnah Temple, Babylon (reconstruction)

Archaeological Light

Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder. For comment on his boast recorded in 30, see notes on 2 Kings 25 (previous parts), where the excavations on his capital city, Babylon, are mentioned; also notes on Jeremiah 50-51. The king's inscriptions closely parallel Daniel 45:30.



The reconstructed Ishtar Gate, Babylon

The Ishtar Gate (Arabic: عشتار ب و ابة) was the eighth gate to the inner city of Babylon. It was constructed in about 575 BC by order of King Nebuchadnezzar II on the north side of the city. Dedicated to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, the gate was constructed using a rare blue stone called lapis lazuli with alternating rows of bas-relief mušhuššu (dragons) and aurochs. The roof and doors of the gate were of cedar, according to the dedication plaque. Through the gate ran the Processional Way, which was lined with walls covered in lions on glazed

bricks (about 120 of them). Statues of the deities were paraded through the gate and down the Processional Way each year during the New Year's celebration. Originally the gate, being part of the Walls of Babylon, was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the world until, in the 6th century AD, it was replaced by the Lighthouse of Alexandria. A reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way was built at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin out of material excavated by Robert Koldewey and finished in the 1930s. It includes the inscription plaque. It stands 47 feet high and 100 feet wide (14 meters by 30 meters). The excavation ran from 1902–1914, and, during that time, 45 feet of the foundation of the gate was uncovered. The gate was in fact a double gate. The part that is shown in the Pergamon Museum today is only the smaller, frontal part, while the larger, back part was considered too large to fit into the constraints of the structure of the museum. It is in storage..

Chapter 5

Belshazzar's Feast

- 1. Belshazzar's licentious feast (Daniel 5:1-4)*
- 2. The writing on the wall (Daniel 5:5-9)*
- 3. Forgotten Daniel (Daniel 5:10-16)*
- 4. The message of Daniel (Daniel 5:17-31)*

Verses 1-9. Belshazzar's licentious and blasphemous celebration

Daniel 5:1-4. This feast of wickedness and blasphemy needs no further annotations. But it shows the great decline morally in the great Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar, no doubt, had handled the golden vessels of the house of the Lord most carefully. He had stored them away, fearing to misuse them. The grandson sent for these vessels to drink out of them wine with his harlots and to praise his idols.

Daniel 5:5-9. A mysterious finger then wrote over against the candlestick on the wall. The king saw plainly the part of the hand that wrote. The feast of licentiousness became suddenly a feast of gloom and consternation. Nor could the astrologers and wise men read the writing which had appeared on the wall.

Verses 10-28. The forgotten Daniel and His message of doom

Verses 29-31. The reward of Daniel and Belshazzar's death

Daniel 5:10-16. At this point the queen, the aged widow of Nebuchadnezzar, appeared on the scene and called attention to an old man, who played such an important part during the reign of her husband. Daniel is sent for.

Daniel 5:17-31. Daniel refused the honors of the king. He knew that ere long the blaspheming king would be no more. And Daniel was more than an interpreter of the handwriting on the wall. He is God's prophet and messenger, as a reading of this portion of the chapter shows.

This chapter reveals the blasphemous character of the end of the Babylonian monarchy. Blasphemy, rejection of God's truth are about us on all sides. There is a "Mene, Mene, Tekel" for apostate Christendom and for that final phase of Babylon as revealed in Revelation 17:1-18; Revelation 18:1-24.

Chapter 6

Under Darius the Mede and Daniel in the Lion's Den

- 1. The decree of Darius (Daniel 6:1-9)*
- 2. Daniel's faith and steadfastness (Daniel 6:10-15)*
- 3. Daniel cast into the lion's den and the deliverance (Daniel 6:16-24)*
- 4. The Decree of Darius (Daniel 6:25-28)*

Verses 1-28. Darius the Mede and Daniel.

Daniel 6:1-9. From the opening of this chapter we learn that Daniel also held a very high position in the beginning of the second monarchy, which had conquered Babylonia. He was preferred above all the other presidents and princes. This created jealousy. They devised a very cunning plan and made the king sign a decree, which they were sure Daniel would break. Inasmuch as the law of the Persians and Medes was irrevocable they were sure that the hated old man would be cast into the lion's den.

Daniel 6:10-15. It is a beautiful scene. When Daniel knew the decree had been signed, he went calmly back into his house and with his windows open towards Jerusalem he prayed and gave thanks to the Lord. He looked away from earthly

circumstances and looked to the Omnipotent One. The accusation followed. The king now discovers that he is in a desperate condition. His law demands that Daniel be cast to the lions, but his heart filled with love for Daniel would have liked to save him, but he found no way of delivering him.

Well may we think here of another law and another love. God, a holy and righteous God and a God of love, found a way to save man. God's holy law condemns man, who is a sinner and the curse of the law rests upon him. God's love is set upon the world, and He "so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The curse of the law came upon Him who knew no sin and who was made sin for us, and therein is love manifested. Daniel is cast into the lions' den as our blessed Lord was given to the lion [Psalms 22:21](#), and a stone is laid upon the mouth of the den and it is sealed with the king's signet. He is so to speak in a grave, as good as dead in the eyes of the world, for who has ever heard of hungry lions not devouring a man. And all this brings before us that other place, the tomb in the garden, where He was laid and the stone before it, which bore the seal of the Roman world power. But as Daniel could not be hurt by the lions, so He who went into the jaws of death could not be holden by death. The tomb is empty and He is victor over death and the grave. All this is blessedly foreshadowed in this experience of God's prophet.

The Lord in whom Daniel trusted and whom he served delivered him from the lions. His accusers and their families were given to the ferocious beasts, which devoured them at once.

Daniel 6:25-28. King Darius also acknowledged the God of Daniel.

The final characteristic of the times of the Gentiles is man worship. The heads of these empires including the Roman Caesars claimed divine honors. Papal Rome also puts up man as the viceregent of the Lord. And all about us we find the deification of man. Finally there comes the head of all this apostasy, the son of perdition, the man of sin, who demands worship for himself 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17.

II. THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

Chapter 7

The night visions of Daniel – the four-beast vision

- 1. The night vision of the three beasts (Daniel 7:1-6)*
- 2. The night vision of the fourth beast (Daniel 7:7-8)*
- 3. The judgment vision (Daniel 7:9-12)*
- 4. The son of man and His kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14)*
- 5. The interpretation of the visions given (Daniel 7:15-28)*

Verses 1-8. The vision of the beasts

Daniel 7:1-6. The sea in the vision is the type of nations Revelation 17:15. The three first beasts he saw represented the same great monarchies which were shown to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream by the gold, silver and brass. The lion Daniel saw first rising out of the sea stands for the Babylonian empire symbolized by the lion Jeremiah 4:7. The plucking of the wings and the man's heart must refer to Nebuchadnezzar's insanity and restoration (chapter 4). The bear is the emblem of the Medo-Persian monarchy (corresponding to the chest of silver in the image). One side of the bear was raised up, higher than the other, because the Persian element was the strongest. The three ribs denote the conquest of three provinces by this power. The leopard with four heads and wings is the picture of the great Alexandrine empire, the Graeco-Macedonian (corresponding to the belly and thighs of brass in the image).

The four wings denote its swiftness, the four heads the partition of this empire into the kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Asia Minor. It is seen in the next chapter as the rough he-goat with a notable horn (Alexander the Great) and the little horn (Antiochus Epiphanes). The fourth beast was not seen in the first vision. Before we turn to the second night vision of the prophet we call attention to the fact that in the selection of beasts to represent these world powers who domineer the times of the Gentiles, God tells us that their moral character is beastly. The lion devours, the bear crushes, the leopard springs upon its prey.

Daniel 7:7-8. This represents Rome, corresponding to the two legs of iron and the ten horns with the little horn between has the same meaning as the ten toes on the feet of the image. The little horn we find more fully mentioned in another

portion of this chapter. Thus the prophet beheld the same monarchies revealed in the second chapter under the emblem of ferocious beasts. Such the nations are and in their standards and national emblems they have borne witness to their beastly characters. Notice also here the same process of deterioration as in the image. The monarchies degenerate from lion to bear, from bear to leopard and then into a great nondescript.

Verses 9-14. The vision of Messiah's second advent

Daniel 7:9-12. This vision brings us to the close of the times of the Gentiles. When the fourth beast with the ten horns and the little horn, the last thing spoken of this world empire, is in full swing, then the end comes. It is a great judgment scene which is here before us. How different the end of this age as revealed in the Word and as it is believed in Christendom. The great mass knows nothing whatever about this age coming to an end. It will go on indefinitely, so they believe, and its future is world progress, better times and the triumph of the Christian civilization. But others concede that a judgment must come and they think of the judgment here as the universal judgment, the great white throne judgment. This judgment is not the last judgment at all. It is a judgment which precedes the final judgment by 1,000 years. This judgment here must be read in connection with passages like Matthew 25:31-46 and Revelation 19:19-21. In reading the last passage no one can doubt that we have the same judgment here revealed to Daniel. But who is the one who occupies the central place in this vision of judgment? There can be but one answer. It is our ever blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. John 5:22 gives the conclusive answer: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The Ancient of Days is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is still more demonstrated if we turn to John's great Patmos vision.

Daniel 7:13-14. These words are so plain that every Christian knows what they mean. They describe the second coming of Christ and the kingdom He then receives from the Father's hands. If this passage were more considered, Christians would stop speaking about the kingdom now. No kingdom till Christ comes again. Both the judgment vision and the vision of His coming to receive the kingdom correspond to the stone which smites the image and as a mountain fills the whole earth.

Verses 15-28 The interpretation of the vision

Daniel 7:15-28. First, Daniel hears about the four beasts. But there is a significant statement in Daniel 7:18, the saints of the Most High receiving the kingdom.

Who are the Saints of the Most High? The fact that the term “Most High” is in the plural and may also be translated with “the most high or heavenly places” has led some expositors to say that the saints are the same who are seen in the Epistle to the Ephesians in which “the heavenly places” are repeatedly mentioned: in other words, the saints which compose the Church. It is true the Church will be with the Lord in Glory and “we shall reign over the earth,” but this does not necessarily mean that the saints here represent the Church. There are other saints besides “Church saints.” The saints of whom Daniel was thinking were his own beloved people. To that people is promised a kingdom in the days of the Messiah. With Him, the Lord in glory, there is a heavenly people, so as Messiah and the Son of Man in connection with the earth He has an earthly people, saints which will receive and possess with Him that kingdom which will fill the whole earth. These saints are the Godfearing Jews, who pass through the great tribulation and inherit the blessings and promises which God gave through their own prophets.

Another important matter is the little horn of whom now Daniel hears more fully. The ten horns are kings and the little horn in their midst will be the final imperial head of the revived Roman empire, that world domineering person of whom we read repeatedly in the Word of God. He must be distinguished from another one, the personal anti-Christ, the man of sin and son of perdition. In Revelation the revived Roman Empire is seen in Revelation 13:1-10, and the second beast which John saw rising from the sea is the false Christ having two horns like a lamb but speaking like a dragon Revelation 13:11, etc.) A closer study of these coming leaders of the end time is needed to understand the details; here we but point the way. Our larger work on Daniel will give help on all these chapters.

Chapter 8

The Ram, the He-Goat and the small horn

1. The vision (Daniel 8:1-14)

2. The interpretation of the vision (Daniel 8:15-27)

Verses 1-14. The vision

Daniel 8:1-14. Beginning with this chapter to the end of the book prophecy will lead us mostly upon Jewish ground. While some of these prophecies were fulfilled in the past, most of them are related to the future when the great end fulfillment takes place before the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom. The phrases “the latter times,” “the time of the end,” “in the last end of the indignation,” appear several times in these chapters. These phrases describe the same period of time mentioned in the seventh chapter, “a time, times and dividing of times; “ the 1,260 days or 42 months in the book of Revelation. It is the great tribulation which is recorded in the last chapter of this book.

The time and place of the vision in this chapter are given in the beginning. The ram, according to divine interpretation (Daniel 8:15, etc.), is the Medo-Persian monarchy--the silver kingdom, the kingdom also typified by the bear. The he-goat with a notable horn is the Graeco- Macedonian monarchy and the notable horn is Alexander the Great. In 334 B. C., Alexander leaped like a swift he-goat across the Hellespont and fought his successful battles, then pushed on to the banks of the Indus and the Nile and then onward to Shushan. The great battles of the Granicus, Issus and Arbella were fought, and he stamped the power of Persia and its King, Darius Codomannus, to the ground. He conquered rapidly Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Tyre, Gaza, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia. In 329 he conquered Bactria, crossed the Oxus and Jaxaitis and defeated the Scythians. And thus he stamped upon the ram after having broken its horns. But when the he goat had waxed very great, the great horn was broken. This predicted the early and sudden death of Alexander the Great. He died after a reign of 12 years and eight months, after a career of drunkenness and debauchery in 323 B.C. He died when he was but 32 years old. Then four notable ones sprang up in the place of the broken horn. This too has been fulfilled, for the empire of Alexander was divided into four parts. Four of the great generals of Alexander made the division namely, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy. The four great divisions were, Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Asia Minor.

Then a little horn appeared out of one of these divisions; it sprung up out of Syria. This little horn is of course not the little horn mentioned in the previous chapter, for the little horn in Daniel 7:1-28 has its place in connection with the fourth beast (Rome), while this one comes from a division of the third beast, the Graeco-Macedonian monarchy.

History does not leave us in doubt of how and when this great prophetic vision was fulfilled. This little horn is the eighth king of the Seleucid dynasty. He is

known by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes; after his wild and wicked deeds he was called Epiphanes, the madman. Long before he invaded the pleasant land (Israel's land), Daniel saw what he would do. He conquered Jerusalem. He took away the daily sacrifice in the temple and offered a swine and swine's blood upon the altar. He introduced idol worship, devastated the whole land and killed some 100,000 Jews.

In **Daniel 8:13-14** is an angelic conversation. The 2,300 days (literal days) cover just about the period of time during which Antiochus did his wicked deeds. When they were ended Judas Maccabaeus cleansed the sanctuary about December 25, 165 B.C.

We believe these 2,300 days are therefore literal days and have found their literal fulfillment in the dreadful days of this wicked king from the north. There is no other meaning attached to these days and the foolish speculations that these days are years, etc., lacks scriptural foundation altogether. Such views and fanciful interpretations bring the study of prophecy into disrepute. We have special reference to the Seventh Day Adventist delusion. They teach the abominable falsehood that the Lord Jesus Christ did not enter into the Holiest till the year 1844 had been reached, because this is according to their reckoning 2,300 years after Cyrus had issued the command to build the temple. That this is a denial of the gospel itself and satanic is self-evident.

Verses 15-27. The interpretation of the vision

Daniel 8:15-27. Gabriel is the interpreter of the whole vision. It should be carefully studied. It points to a future fulfillment.

Gabriel told Daniel that the vision has a special meaning for the time of the end. Four different expressions are used to denote the time of the final fulfillment of the vision: (1) "The time of the end" (Daniel 8:17); (2) "The last end of the indignation" (Daniel 8:19); (3) "The latter time of their kingdom" (Daniel 8:23); (4) "When the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23).

Once more, at the close of the age, before the Lord comes in visible glory, in the days of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, an invasion from the north takes place. Israel's land will once more undergo the horrors of a devastation, foreshadowed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The king of the north, as he is also called in Isaiah's prophecy, "the Assyrian," will do this work. For details and other prophecies relating to this coming event see our exposition of Daniel, pages 102-118.

Chapter 9

The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

1. *The time and occasion of Daniel's prayer (Daniel 9:1-2)*
2. *The prayer (Daniel 9:3-19)*
3. *The answer and the prophecy of the seventy weeks (Daniel 9:20-27)*

Verses 1-19. Daniel's prayer

Daniel 9:1-2. It was in the first year of Darius, of the seed of the Medes, that Daniel understood by the sacred writings of his people, especially by the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the end of the years of the captivity was at hand. The promises in the Word of God led him at once to seek the face of the Lord and he poured out a wonderful prayer in His presence.

Daniel 9:3-19. It has three parts: Daniel 9:4-10 : Confession of the failure of his people and acknowledgment of God's covenant mercies. Daniel 9:11-14 : The deserved curse as written in the law of Moses. Daniel 9:15-19 : Pleadings for mercy to turn away His anger and to remember His city, Jerusalem and His people. Throughout this prayer we read how completely he identified himself with the sins, the failure, the shame and the judgment of the people of God. This is remarkable. As we have seen from the first chapter, he was brought to Babylon when quite young and belonged even then to the believing, God fearing element of the nation. Yet he speaks of the nation's sins, their rebellion, their transgressions of the law and their wicked deeds as if they belonged to him. Of all the Bible characters Daniel appears as the purest. The failures of Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David and others are recorded, but Daniel appears with no flaw whatever in his character. As far as the record goes he was a perfect man. Of course he too was "a man of like passions" as we are, and as such a sinner. Yet this devoted and aged servant with such a record of loyalty to God and to His laws confesses all the people's sins and the curse and shame, which came upon them, as His own.

Verses 20-27. The answer-the prophesy of the seventy weeks.

Daniel 9:20-27. The prayer was not ended. How near heaven is may be learned from Daniel 9:20-27. Heaven is not far away, for there is no space and no distance with God. When Daniel began his confession and humiliation the Lord called Gabriel and instructed him what he should tell the praying prophet, and then Gabriel was caused to fly swiftly through the immeasurable space, and

before Daniel ever reached the “Amen” the messenger stood before him and stopped his prayer. What blessed assurance! The moment we pray in the Spirit and in His Name our voices are heard in the highest heaven.

We give a corrected text of the great prophecy, perhaps the greatest in the entire prophetic Word.

Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies. Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The street and the wall shall be built again, even in troublous times. And after the sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with overflow, and unto the end war, the desolations determined. And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until the consummation and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolator (Daniel 9:24-27).

The literal translation of the term “seventy weeks” is “seventy-sevens.” Now, this word “sevens” translated “weeks” may mean “days” and it may mean “years.” What then is meant here, seventy times seven days or seventy times seven years? It is evident that the “sevens” mean year weeks, seven years to each prophetic week. Daniel was occupied in reading the books and in prayer with the seventy years of Babylonian captivity. And now Gabriel is going to reveal to him something which will take place in “seventy-sevens,” which means seventy times seven years. The proof that such is the case is furnished by the fulfilment of the prophecy itself. Now seventy-seven years makes 490 years.

What is to be accomplished. Daniel 9:24 gives the great things which are to be accomplished during these seventy-year weeks or 490 years. They are the following: (1) To finish the transgression; (2) To make an end of sins. (3) To cover iniquity, (4) To bring in the righteousness of ages; (5) To seal the vision and prophet; (6) To anoint the Holy of Holies.

It must be borne in mind that these things concern exclusively Daniel’s people and not Gentiles but the holy city Jerusalem. It is clear that the finishing of transgression, the end of sins and the covering of iniquity has a special meaning for Israel as a nation.

Now, these seventy year-weeks are divided into three parts. The first part consists in seven weeks, that is seven times seven, 49 years. During these 49 years the street and the wall of Jerusalem was to be rebuilt and the complete restoration accomplished. The reckoning of this time begins in the month Nisan, 445 B.C., when the command was given Nehemiah 2:1-20. Then follows the second division consisting of 62 weeks of years, that is sixty-two times seven, 434 years. At the close of these 434 years, or 483 years reckoned from the month Nisan in 445 B. C., Messiah the Prince should be cut off and have nothing. Messiah the Prince is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Here then is a startling prediction of the death of Christ, the Messiah rejected by His people and not receiving the kingdom which belongs to Him as the Son of David. The sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, expired on the day our Lord rode into Jerusalem for the last time; during that week He was crucified. (For full proof see *The Coming Prince*, by Anderson, and our book on the Prophet Daniel.)

Then we have a remarkable prediction concerning the fate of Jerusalem after the nation rejected the Lord Jesus Christ: "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end war, the desolations determined." Who is "the prince that shall come?" Expositors have erred seriously in making of this prince the Lord Jesus Christ. This prince is not our Lord. It is the little horn predicted in Daniel 7:1-28 to rise out of the Roman Empire in the time of the end, when the Roman Empire is revived politically and has its ten horns. Therefore "the people of the prince that shall come" are the Roman people. Here then is a prediction that the Romans were to take the city and burn the sanctuary. How literally this has been fulfilled! And all this was revealed when the Roman Empire was not yet in existence. Such are the marvels of divine prophecy. After that there are to be wars and desolations for Jerusalem and the Jewish people. It is the same that our Lord predicted when He said: "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations" Luke 21:24.

But all this leaves seven years, that is one week, unaccounted for. We have up to now 483 years, and there are to be 490 years. The last week of seven years is still future. The course of the Jewish age was interrupted. It is an unfinished age. Between the 483 years which ended when the nation rejected the Lord of Glory and the beginning of the last seven years of the Jewish age, this last year-week is this present age, the unreckoned period of time during which God does His great work in sending forth the gospel of His grace to the Gentile nations, to gather out of them a people for His Name. This age of grace is still on but it will end some day when God's purpose is accomplished. Then the true Church will be gathered home to glory and the Lord will turn again to His people Israel and the last week of Daniel will pass into history. During these seven years the Prince

that shall come, the little horn of Daniel 7:1-28, will enter into a covenant with the Jewish people. Not with all of them, for there is a remnant of godly Jews who will not accept this one (indicated by the expression the many”--see correct translation). In the middle of the week he breaks that covenant and the result will be the great tribulation, the time, times and half of a time, 1,260 days, 42 months of Daniel 7:1-28 and Revelation 13:1-18. When this great tribulation ends the Lord Jesus Christ comes back and the great things mentioned in Daniel 9:24 will be accomplished.

Chapter 10

The Preparation for the Final Prophecy

The role of demonic powers in governments

Verses 1-14. The vision

Verses 15-21. The meaning of the vision

This chapter contains the preface to the final great prophecies as found in the last two chapters of this book. The certain man who appeared unto Daniel at the banks of the river Hiddekel (Tigris) was the Lord. Compare with Revelation 1:1-20, where John, the beloved disciple, beheld Him in a vision of glory. Daniel’s vision is a pre-incarnation vision of the same One whom John beheld after His resurrection and in His glorified humanity.

The delayed answer by the angelic messenger is explained by the power of darkness. A powerful demon-prince, a satanic agency, having control over Persia, so that he claimed the title the prince of Persia, kept back the answer. Then the prophet was strengthened.

Chapter 11

The Wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae Predicted

The Coming Events of the End

Kings of the north and south

- 1. The wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae (Daniel 11:1-35)*
- 2. The time of the end and the man of sin (Daniel 11:36-45)*

Verses 1-35. The wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucids

Daniel 11:1-35. Here we have history pre-written and the greater part of this chapter (Daniel 11:2-35) is fulfilled historically. So accurate are these predictions and their subsequent fulfillment that the enemies of “the Scripture of truth” have declared that it could never have been written by Daniel several hundred years before these persons came into existence and fought their battles. The pagan Porphyry in the third century in his “Treatise against Christians” bitterly attacked the belief that Daniel wrote these predictions. He argued that all was written after the events had taken place. The same arguments are used by the critics. Such is this most subtle infidelity that it can make use of the statements of a poor heathen in opposition to the divine revelation.

The prophecies given here were minutely fulfilled during the years 301 B.C., to 168 B.C. History verifies everything. The history covers a good part of the Persian and Graeco-Macedonian Empires, but mostly the wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae. Artaxerxes, Darius, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy Lagris, the King of the South, Ptolemy Euergetes, Seleucus Calinicus, Ptolemy Philopater, Antiochus Epiphanes, even the Roman fleet (the ships of Chittim), all enter into this prophecy. A detailed exposition of the prophecy and its fulfillment would fill many pages.

Before we pass on we desire to say again that all in these verses we have briefly followed has been historically fulfilled. We point out a mistake in which some have fallen. In Daniel 11:31 we read of “the abomination that maketh desolate.” Our Lord in His Olivet discourse Matthew 24:15 said: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand).” Some believe that when our Lord spoke these words he referred to Daniel 11:31, and that this is the abomination of desolation. This is not quite correct. The abomination that maketh desolate of verse 31 is past and happened in the days of the atrocities committed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The abomination of desolation to which our Lord refers is mentioned in Daniel 12:11, and it points, as we shall find later, to the abomination set up by the Antichrist, the second beast, in the middle of the week. The typical meaning of Antiochus Epiphanes and his crimes in the land of Judea and against Jerusalem we have already learned in connection with chapter 8.

Verses 36-45. The end-time and the man of sin

Daniel 11:36-45. The time of the end is mentioned in verse 35. What is to befall Daniel’s people in the latter days as Daniel was told in Daniel 10:14 is now

revealed. Between Daniel 11:35 and Daniel 11:36 we must put a long and unreckoned period of time. Antiochus Epiphanes and the victorious Maccabees end the historical fulfillment of the predictions of the great prophecies in the first part of this chapter, and since then over 2,000 years have come and gone and the fulfillment of Daniel 11:36-45 have not yet been. First we read of a wilful king. Who is this king so fully pictured in Daniel 11:36-45?

Many expositors of Daniel apply this passage to Antiochus Epiphanes because they see not the important interval which exists between Daniel 11:35 and Daniel 11:36. However, a closer examination of the description of this king shows that he cannot be Antiochus. He is another person altogether, and as we shall see later, will be a Jew and assume kingly honors in the midst of the Jewish people. Antiochus was a Gentile. Others again identify this King with the first beast in Revelation 13:1-18, and say that the head of the revived Roman Empire, one like Napoleon the First is meant, while others see here a reference to the pope in Rome. And whether the head of the Roman power, or the pope, or perhaps Mohammed, the term "Antichrist" is freely applied to each. Those who see the papacy here and the Romish corruption make some startling applications which are extremely fanciful.

The wilful king is the Antichrist. The Jewish people rejected their King, the Messiah, who came to His own, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord told the Jews: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" John 5:43. This other one has not yet come. We have his photograph here. He appears in Israel's land in the time of the end as a counterfeit Messiah and takes also the place of king in their midst. This wilful king, the personal Antichrist who deceives the apostate mass of the Jewish people, is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament prophetic Word. Isaiah speaks of him and his end Isaiah 30:33; Isaiah 57:9. Zechariah calls him "the idol shepherd" Zechariah 11:15-17. He is repeatedly mentioned in the Psalms as "the wicked man"--"the man of the earth"-- "the bloody and deceitful man." In the book of Revelation he appears as the second beast out of the land (Palestine) Revelation 13:11-18. The two horns like a lamb as he is described there show clearly that he imitates Christ. He has the spirit of the dragon and appears as a religious leader, for this reason he is also called "the false prophet" in the book of Revelation (Revelation 16:13; Revelation 19:20; Revelation 20:10).

In the New Testament he is called in the writings of John "the Antichrist". (See 1 John 2:18-25; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7.) Another great prophecy of the same person is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, where he is called "the man of sin, the son of perdition." The early Church believed that this evil person will be a

real man, a Jew, and be energized by Satan. That he is the papal system or something else was invented later.

In Daniel 11:40-45 we have a prophecy of the wars and conflicts during the time of the end. The false king, Israel's false Messiah, the Antichrist, plays an important part in these conflicts. Then there are the kings of the south and of the north. The king of the south comes out of Egypt. His antagonist is the king of the north. The king of the south will be overthrown by the powerful king of the North, the same who is typified by the Antiochus Epiphanes. (Read about this invasion in Joel 2:1-32 and Zechariah 14:1-21)

While the king of the north and his proud hosts are thus overthrown by the army of the Lord, what becomes of the wilful king, the Antichrist in the city? The king of the north cannot touch him. But the Lord Himself will deal with that wicked one. "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Thus ends the great conflict of the time of the end. The eternal abode of the satanic instruments of the time of the end, the beast, that coming prince, the Antichrist and the king of the north will be the lake of fire.

Chapter 12

The Great Tribulation and Israel's Deliverance

Verse 1. The great end-time period of trouble

Verses 2-3. Israel's resurrection

Verses 4-13. The final consummation

"And at that time." What time? The time of the end, the time of trouble such as never was before; the same time to which our Lord refers in Matthew 24:21.

Michael, the great prince which standeth for the Jewish people, is now also mentioned again. He will stand up and take a leading part in the events of that time. From the book of Revelation we learn (chapter 12) that there will be war in heaven, that is where Satan has his dominion now as the prince of the power of the air. Michael, assisted by his angels, will cast out the great dragon, the devil and his angels. They will be forced down to the earth. Then when Satan and his angels are cast out the great tribulation will be instituted Revelation 12:12. Michael will stand up in another sense and take a definite part in the deliverance of Daniel's people. It is not fully revealed what that will be.

The deliverance of which we read in these verses and the awakening of those “who sleep in the dust of the earth” has likewise been grossly misinterpreted. Because expositors have not seen the application of all this to the Jews in their future history in the land, they have read the church in here, and even what they term a general resurrection on a general judgment day. But we shall see now what is meant by the deliverance of Daniel’s people.

Physical resurrection (as so often stated: a general resurrection) is not taught in the second verse. Physical resurrection is used as a figure of the national revival of Israel in that day. They have been sleeping nationally in the dust of the earth, buried among the Gentiles. But at that time there will take place a national restoration, a bringing together of the house of Judah and of Israel. It is the same figure as used in the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-28. This vision is employed by the men, who have invented the theory of a second chance and larger hope for the wicked dead to back up their evil teaching, but anyone can see that it concerns not the Gentiles but the Jewish people and that it is not a bodily resurrection, but a national revival and restoration of that people. Their national graves, not literal burying places, will be opened and the Lord will bring them forth out of all the countries into which they have been scattered.

There will be two classes, the godly and the ungodly. The ungodly accept the false Messiah, and in their national revival, shame and everlasting contempt awaits them, while the others, the godly, will enjoy life in the kingdom. The wise in verse 3 are the Jewish teachers and witnesses in the end time, those which compose the godly remnant. A special reward will be theirs during the kingdom, they shall shine as the stars forever. The same holds good, only in a higher sense for all those who are witnesses for Him during this age, who are faithful to Christ.

Then Daniel is addressed and beholds angels once more, as well Him who appeared clothed in linen, none other than the Lord. Then Daniel asked his final question.

Daniel 12:11-12 have puzzled many readers of the book. Different theories are given.

But what is the meaning of these 1,290 and 1,335 days? Can there be anything plainer than the fact that these 1,290 and 1,335 days are literal days? Who authorizes us to make of these days years? By what process of exposition are we to arrive at the conclusion that “days” mean “years?” It is worse than folly to do that.

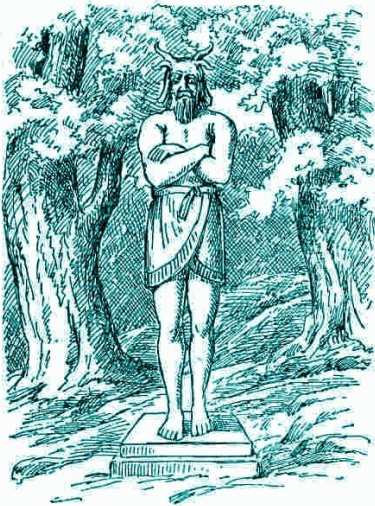
Now, the great tribulation lasts for 1,260 days. But here we have 30 days or a whole month added. The Lord will be manifested at the close of the great tribulation of 1,260 days, 3-1/2 years. Matthew 24:29-51 teaches us this. The extra month will in all probability be needed to make possible certain judgment events especially with the overthrow of the nations which came against Jerusalem and the judgment of nations as given in Matthew 25:31. We cannot speak dogmatically on all this. But certain it is that 1,335 days after the Antichristian abomination had been set up in Jerusalem, that is, 75 days, or 2-1/2 months beyond the time of the great tribulation, the full blessing for Israel and the establishment of the glorious rule of Israel's King, the once rejected Lord Jesus Christ, will have come, for it is written, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days." This is as far as any teacher can safely go, and here we would rest.

Pictorial Bible Story in Daniel by Gustav Doré

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This

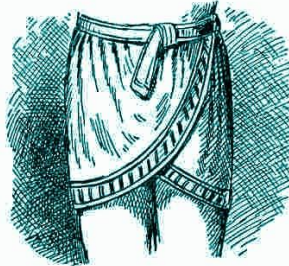
whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This



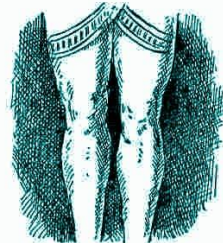
was of
fine
gold,
his



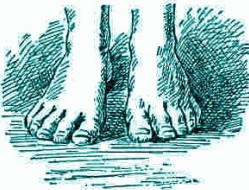
of silver, his belly and his



of
brass,
His



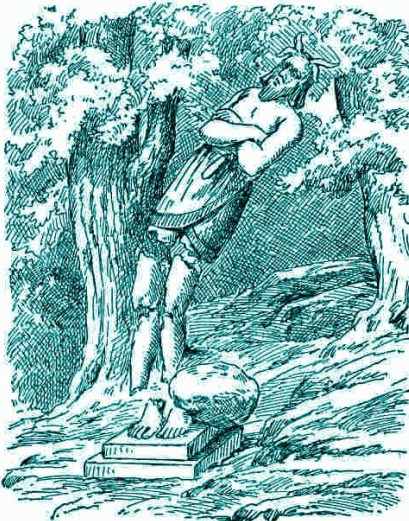
of
iron,
his



part of iron and part of clay.

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which

that were of iron
and clay, and brake
them to pieces.
Then was the iron,
the clay, the brass,
the silver, and
the gold,



together, and became like the chaff of the
summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried
them

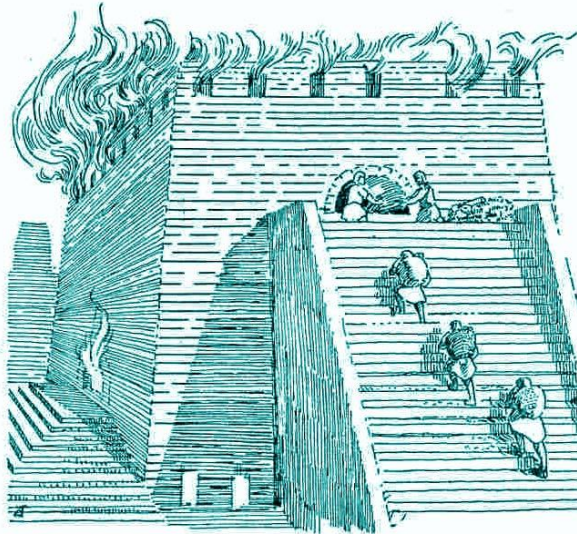
away,
that no
place was
found for
them: and the



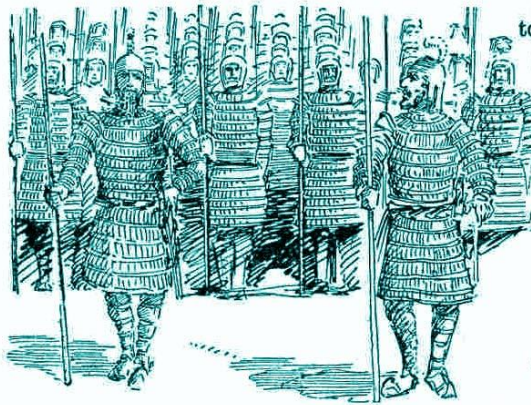
that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

THE FIERY FURNACE

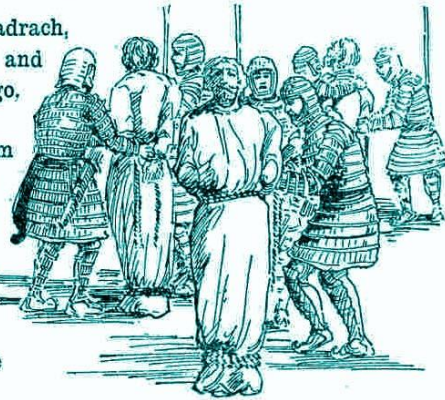
Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the



one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his



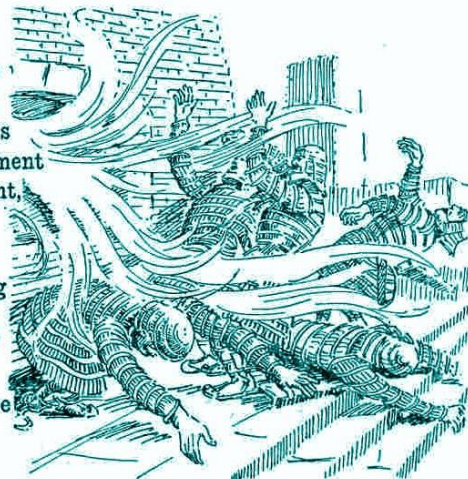
to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were



in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were



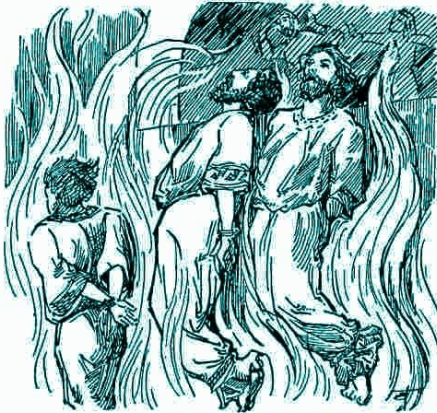
Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those



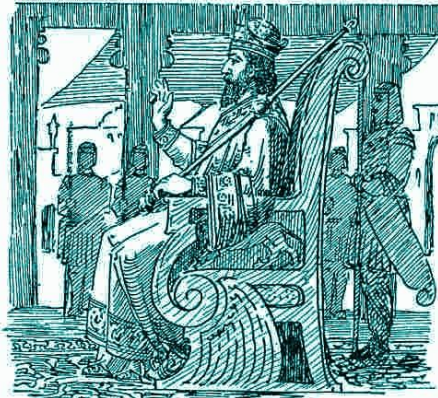
that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

THE FIERY FURNACE

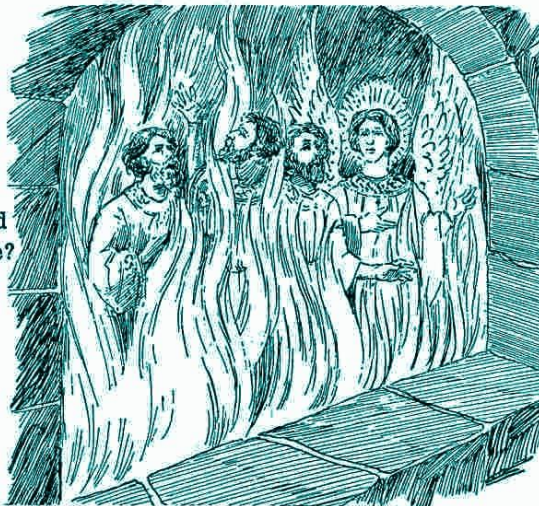
And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,



bound into
the midst
of the
burning
fiery
furnace.
Then
Nebuchad
nezzar the



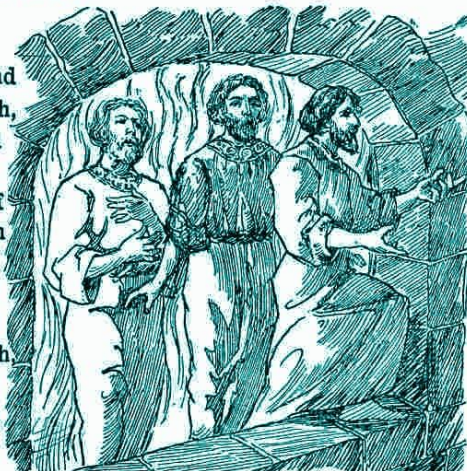
was astonished, and rose
up in haste, and spake,
and said unto his
counsellors, Did not
we cast three men bound
into the midst of the fire?
They answered and said
unto the king, True,
O king. He answered
and said, Lo, I see



and they have no
hurt; and the form of
the fourth is like the
Son of God. Then
Nebuchadnezzar
came near to the



and spake, and
said, Shadrach,
Meshach, and
Abednego,
ye servants of
the most high
God, come
forth, and
come hither.
Then Shadrach
Meshach,
and Abednego



of the midst of the fire.

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DAN. III: 23-26.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his



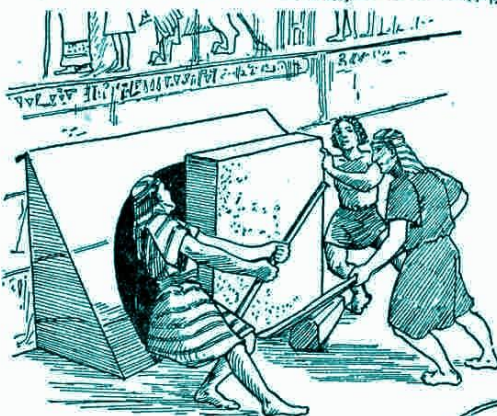
in his
chamber
toward
Jerusalem,
he



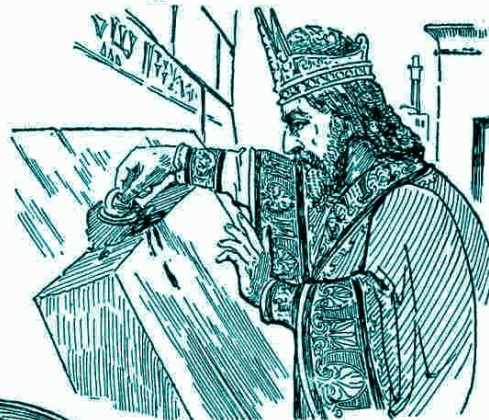
three times a
day, and
prayed, and
gave thanks
before his God,
as he did
aforetime. * *
Then the king
commanded, and
they brought
Daniel, and



Now the king
spake and
said unto
Daniel, Thy
God whom
thou servest
continually,
he will deliver
thee. And a
stone was
brought, and



and



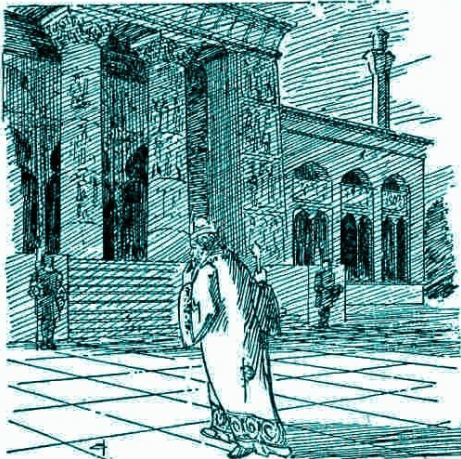
with his own signet, and with the



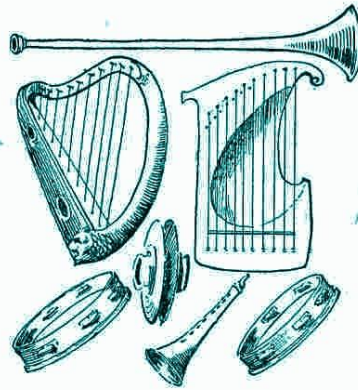
of his lords; that the purpose might
not be changed concerning Daniel.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

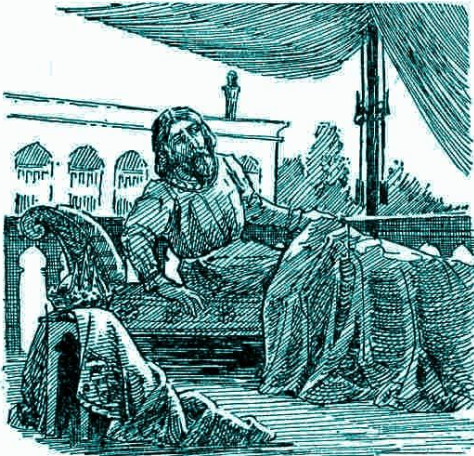
Then the king



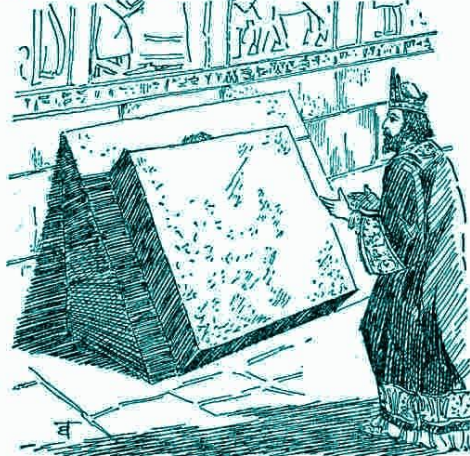
and passed
the night
fasting:
neither were



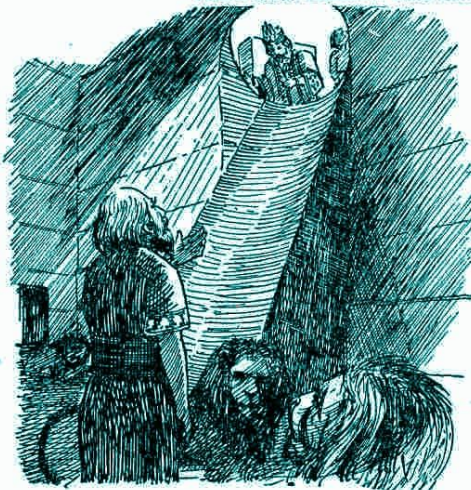
brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king



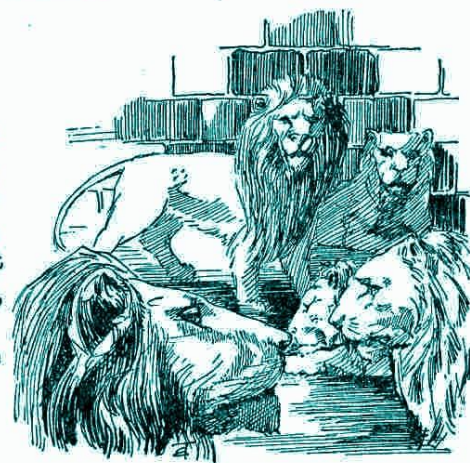
very early
in the
morning,
and went
in haste
unto



of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable
voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to



O Daniel,
servant of
the living
God, is thy
God, whom
thou servest
continually,
able to
deliver thee
from the



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

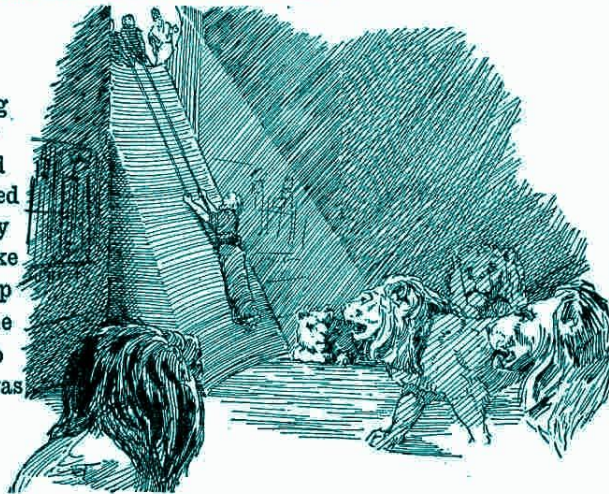
Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his



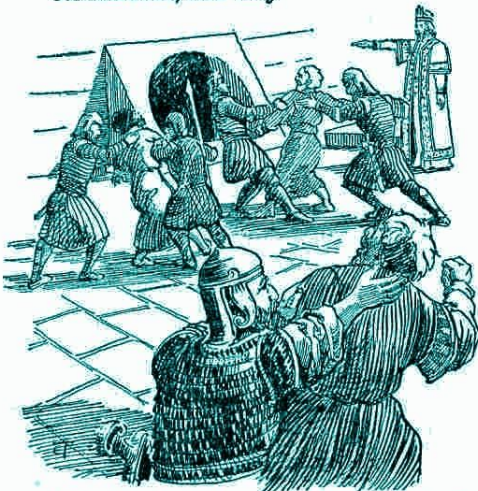
and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the



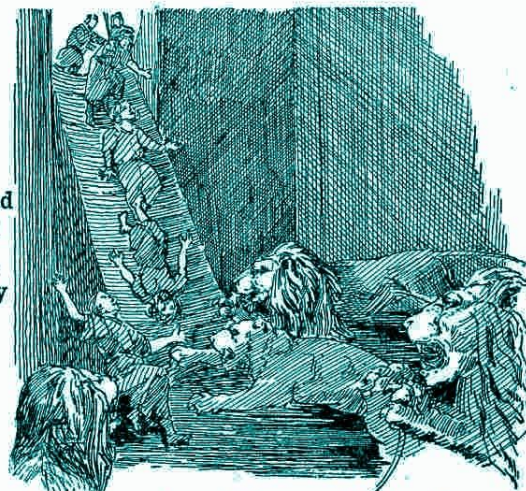
exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was



and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they



which had accused Daniel, and they



them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Kings of the Bible Tabulation

Kings of the Bible

David

Solomon

The Kings of Israel (all wicked)

Jeroboam I (933-911 BC) twenty-two years

Nadab (911-910) two years

Baasha (910-887) twenty-four years

Elah (887-886) two years

Zimri (886) seven days

Omri (886-875) twelve years

Ahab (875-854) twenty-two years

Ahaziah (855-854) two years

Jehoram (Joram) (854-843) twelve years

Jehu (843-816) twenty-eight years

Jehoahaz (820-804) seventeen years

Jehoash (Joash) (806-790) sixteen years

Jeroboam II (790-749) forty-one years

Zechariah' (748) six months

Shallum (748) one month

Menahem (748-738) ten years

Pekahiah (738-736) two years

Pekah (748-730) twenty years

Hoshea (730-721) nine years

The Kings of Judah (8 were good)

Rehoboam (933-916 BC) seventeen years

Abijam (915-913) three years

Asa (Good) (912-872) forty-one years

Jehoshaphat (Good) (874-850) twenty-five years

Jehoram (850-843) eight years

Ahaziah (843) one year

Athaliah (843-837) six years
Joash (Good) (843-803) forty years
Amaziah (Good) (803-775) 29 years
Azariah (Uzziah) (Good) (787-735) fifty-two years
Jotham (Good) (749-734) sixteen years
Ahaz (741-726) sixteen years
Hezekiah (Good) (726-697) 29 years
Manasseh (697-642) fifty-five years
Amon (641-640) two years
Josiah (Good) (639-608) thirty-one years
Jehoahaz (608) three months
Jehoiachim (608-597) eleven years
Jehoiachin (597) three months
Zedekiah (597-586) eleven years

Some Scriptures mentioning the name "Nebuchadnezzar"

Ezra 6:5 - And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which **Nebuchadnezzar** took forth out of the temple which [is] at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which [is] at Jerusalem, [every one] to his place, and place [them] in the house of God.

Jeremiah 27:20 - Which **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;

Daniel 5:11 - There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom [is] the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king **Nebuchadnezzar** thy father, the king, [I say], thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, [and] soothsayers;

2 Kings 25:8 - And in the fifth month, on the seventh [day] of the month, which [is] the nineteenth year of king **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon,

came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

Jeremiah 27:8 - And it shall come to pass, [that] the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same **Nebuchadnezzar** the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

Daniel 4:34 - And at the end of the days I **Nebuchadnezzar** lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom [is] from generation to generation:

Esther 2:6 - Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom **Nebuchadnezzar** the king of Babylon had carried away.

Daniel 3:26 - Then **Nebuchadnezzar** came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, [and] spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come [hither]. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

Ezra 5:14 - And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which **Nebuchadnezzar** took out of the temple that [was] in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto [one], whose name [was] Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;

Daniel 4:18 - This dream I king **Nebuchadnezzar** have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise [men] of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou [art] able; for the spirit of the holy gods [is] in thee.

2 Kings 25:1 - And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth [day] of the month, [that] **Nebuchadnezzar** king of

Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

Jeremiah 29:1 - Now these [are] the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

Ezra 1:7 - Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

Ezra 2:1 - Now these [are] the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

Jeremiah 29:3 - By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,

Jeremiah 28:3 - Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD'S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon:

Daniel 3:7 - Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down [and] worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Daniel 3:24 - Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, [and] spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

Daniel 3:9 - They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.

2 Chronicles 36:10 - And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Ezra 5:12 - But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

Jeremiah 28:14 - For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

Daniel 3:1 - Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height [was] threescore cubits, [and] the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

Jeremiah 28:11 - And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

Daniel 3:5 - [That] at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

Daniel 3:28 - [Then] Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed [be] the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

Daniel 5:2 - Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which [was] in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Daniel 4:31 - While the word [was] in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, [saying], O king **Nebuchadnezzar**, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

Daniel 4:33 - The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon **Nebuchadnezzar**: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' [feathers], and his nails like birds' [claws].

2 Chronicles 36:6 - Against him came up **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar, or, more properly, Nebuchadrezzar. Nebo, protect the boundary ! son and successor of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Babylonian empire (605-562 B.C.). He was sent by his father at the head of an army to punish Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt. This prince had recently invaded Syria, defeated Josiah, king of Judah, at Megiddo, and reduced the whole tract, from Egypt to Carchemish on the upper Euphrates, which in the partition of the Assyrian territories on the destruction of Nineveh had been assigned to Babylon (2 K. 23.29,30). Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho in a great battle at Carchemish, 605 B.C. (Jer. 46.2-12), recovered Ccele-Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, took Jerusalem (Dan. 1.1,2), and was pressing forward to Egypt when, news of his father's death reaching him, he, accompanied only by his light troops, hurried back to Babylon. It was at this time that Daniel and his companions were brought to Babylon, where they soon grew into importance under the favour of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1.3-20). Jehoiakim, who had been retained on the throne of Judah as a vassal king, after three years rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (2 K. 24). The king of Babylon proceeded a second time against Jerusalem, which submitted without a struggle (Jer. 22.18, 19). Jehoiakim was put to death ; his son, Jehoiachin, set up in his stead, showed signs of disaffection within three months ; and Nebuchadnezzar for the third time came up against the city, deposed the young prince, whom he carried off to Babylon (and kept in prison for thirty-six years), together with a large portion of the population, and the chief of the Temple treasures, which he set up in the Temple of Bel-Merodach. Zedekiah, son of King Josiah and uncle of Jehoiachin, who was now made vassal king, entered into a treaty with the ruler of Egypt, in spite of the warning of Jeremiah (Ezek. 17.15), and renounced his allegiance to the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar after eighteen months' siege again captured Jerusalem (586 B.C.); the sons of Zedekiah were executed in the sight of their father ; then Zedekiah's eyes were put out, and he was carried off to

Babylon, there to languish until the close of his life (2 K. 24.8, 25.21). It ought to be noted that the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 32.4,5, 34.3) had foretold the deportation of Zedekiah to Babylon, while Ezekiel (Ezek. 12.13) predicted that he should not see the city. Both prophecies were literally fulfilled, Zedekiah, as we have said, being cruelly blinded before he was carried thither. Gedaliah, a Jew, was appointed Governor of Jerusalem, but shortly afterwards he was murdered, and the rest of the Jews either fled to Egypt or were carried to Babylon. The conquest of Jerusalem was rapidly followed by the fall of Tyre and the complete submission of Phoenicia, 586 B.C. (Ezek. 26 and 28) ; after which the Babylonians carried their arms into Egypt and inflicted severe injuries on that country, 582 B.C. (Jer. 46.13-26; Ezek. 29.2-20). Nebuchadnezzar's boast, " Is not this great Babylon which I have built ? " (Dan. 4.30) was founded upon his truly amazing achievements in the construction of public works. These comprised more than twenty temples, with strengthened fortifications, the excavation of canals, the construction of quays, reservoirs, and aqueducts, vast embankments by the river, and celebrated gardens. All through Babylonia the discovery of bricks stamped with Nebuchadnezzar's name attests his enterprise as well as his opulence and taste. The excavations in Babylon during the last few years, especially the winter of 1908-9, have laid bare much of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, the magnitude of which has not been exaggerated. One of the outer walls, for example, is more than 24 yards thick. One of the best remembered incidents in the life of Nebuchadnezzar is the setting up of the great image in the plain of Dura, the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship it, their casting into the fiery furnace and their miraculous preservation there from all harm (Dan. 3). Towards the close of his reign, as a punishment for his pride and vanity, Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with that strange form of madness which the Greeks called lycanthropy, wherein the sufferer imagines himself a beast, and, quitting the haunts of men, insists on leading the life of a beast (Dan. 4.33). The first use that he made of his restored reason was to acknowledge the justice of the Almighty Ruler of men, and offer a song of praise for the mercy vouchsafed him. He died at an advanced age, having reigned forty-three years. The appearance of a sort of monotheism (Dan. 1.2, 4.24,32,34,37) mixed with polytheism (Dan. 2.47, 3.12, 18, 29, 4.9) in the Scriptural notices of Nebuchadnezzar is explained by his almost exclusive devotion to one god of his country, Merodach. He seems at some times to have identified Merodach with the God of the Jews (Dan. 4) ; at others to have regarded Jehovah as one of the local and inferior deities (Dan. 3) over whom Merodach ruled.

Archaeological light and History

Persepolis



Persepolis / In the forefront - Garrisons, then Hall of Hundred Columns and further - Apadana.

if one compares Persepolis to the marvels of modern architecture it becomes clear: not that much has been achieved over the last 2500 years. The overall quality of the planning, construction and craftsmanship in Persepolis is comparable to the achievements of modern architecture / construction with all its hordes of educated experts, computers and global experience. This wonder of urban planning was created to show off the might of the first Persian Empire - Achaemenid Empire.

Achaemenid Empire

One of the best governed empires in the ancient world was the first Persian Empire - Achaemenid Empire (circa 550 - 330 BC). This period was the zenith of Persian civilization, laying a firm basis for the identity and awareness of present day Iranians. It has left huge impact on world culture - also Western

civilization. The empire in many aspects was a predecessor of Greek and Roman empires.

Achaemenid Empire was founded by a man of extraordinary leadership abilities - **Cyrus the Great** and it replaced the previous regional power - the Median Empire. This was the largest empire in its time, stretching from the present day Libya, Sudan and Greece to India and Uzbekistan. Achaemenid Empire was a multicultural empire with autonomy of satrapies (regions) and freedom of religion. At the times of Cyrus Persians - recent nomadic people - only learned to build monumental structures.

The end of the empire was brought by another distinguished personality - **Alexander the Great**, who conquered the capitals of Persia - Persepolis, Susa and Ecbatana - in 331 - 330 BC.

The magnificent empire needed representative capital city for the ceremonies of imperial importance - and for this there was built entirely new city - **Persepolis**.

Emperors and Persepolis

In the times of **Cyrus the Great** (559 - 530 BC) Persepolis did not exist yet (or was rather insignificant) and capital was in Pasargadae. Nevertheless it is believed that this imperial city was the idea of this great character.

Cambyes II (530 - 523 BC) - son of Cyrus was the next emperor. In his time capital of Persia was in Susa.

Darius the Great (522 - 486 BC) is the true founder of Persepolis - the symbol of the Achaemenid dynasty. He was the next great leader of Persia and managed to strengthen and increase the empire. Darius introduced money - golden and silver coins, taxes adjusted to each region and legislation. In his time there were built 2,500 km of roads, connecting the regions of empire. In Persepolis he ordered to clear from cliffs the terrace and to build the enormous Apadana, Central Palace (Tripylon), Treasury and much of the infrastructure in the city and around it.

Xerxes I (486 - 465 BC) - son of Darius, continued the magnificent construction projects in Persepolis. In his time was completed Apadana, the Palace of Darius and the Treasury. He also built his own palace - twice as large as his father's palace. In his time the architecture in Persepolis became even larger and more luxuriant.

Artaxerxes I (465 - 424 BC) - son of Xerxes - moved the capital of Persia from Persepolis to the ancient metropolis - Babylon. He introduced many farsighted reforms. In his time the main language of the empire became Aramaic instead of the former Elamite, Zoroastrianism became the main religion. When Artaxerxes died in 424 BC, his body was brought to Persepolis - what shows that the city had an important symbolic role anyway.

For a few weeks the empire was governed by **Xerxes II** (424 BC) - son of Artaxerxes. He was assassinated soon after.

There is rather little known about the next emperor - **Darius II** (423 - 404 BC).

Artaxerxes II Memnon (404 - 358 BC) - son of Darius II - moved the capital back to Persepolis. He is remembered as treacherous and lewd ruler (f.e. he married several of his own daughters and had more than 115 sons from 350 wives), but he also loved to show off with magnificent construction projects - albeit none in Persepolis. Zoroastrianism flourished in his times. Inhabitants of the empire had to pay one tenth of income to the nearest temple. In his time there started to appear images of gods - before it was considered that gods are not men and can not be depicted.

In the times of **Artaxerxes III** (358 - 338 BC) - son of Artaxerxes II - the empire became less stable and experienced many revolts. By the end of his reign the true ruler of Persia was the vizier **Bagoas** - a "grey eminence" of the empire. In the times of Artaxerxes III there was ongoing active construction in Persepolis, but such magnificent structures as the Hall of Thirty Two Columns and the Palace of Artaxerxes III were left unfinished.

Artaxerxes IV Arses (338 - 336 BC) was intended as puppet-king by Bagoas - but, as the young king tried to get rid of Bagoas, he was killed.

The last emperor of Achaemenid Empire was **Darius III** (336 - 330 AD). Bagoas installed him as the emperor and soon after tried to poison him. This time the plot was stopped on time and Bagoas was poisoned himself. The empire was declining and the powerful and relentless armies of Alexander the Great were attacking from the west.

Alexander the Great captured Persepolis in 331 BC or early 330 BC - this was done quickly, to catch the treasure in the city. Darius III was killed by his own statesman Bessus and his body was left on the road to delay the troops of Alexander. Alexander did indeed bring the body of the defeated emperor back to Persepolis and buried him with honour. Later, in May 330 BC Alexander though

burned down the city, thus eliminating the symbolic heart of Achaemenid dynasty.

Alexander the Great was a farsighted emperor and in many respects he continued the traditions of the great Persian kings - former enemies to Hellenistic world. After the death of Alexander in 323 BC his newly created empire disintegrated. In Persia was created the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire (312 - 63 BC).

Lower city of Persepolis - below the terraces - was inhabited for some time period after the war - but not much more than a few decades. Since then this wonder of urban design has been abandoned - although it was used as a place of worship for several centuries.

Archaeological Researches

In 19th century started the first excavations - initially looking for valuables but then also - with scientific purposes.

Beautiful drawings of the reconstructions of this ancient city were made by French scientists Chipiez Charles and Georges Perrot in the late 19th century. After the Iranian Revolution in 1978 - 1979 the fundamentalists ordered to bulldoze the site and only in the last moment ruins of Persepolis were saved by the initiative of local people.

The research is on-going, there are made thorough restorations of the site. It is expected that new, large structures will be found here in the future.

Imperial capital

Persepolis (from Greek language - "Persian city") was built to impress and to show off the might of the largest empire of the time. Everything here was planned in smallest detail to create a special atmosphere of superior power and refinement. Craftsmen, artists and materials were brought from all regions of the empire to build the city. Persepolis was built by paid workers - slavery was forbidden by Zoroastrianism.

Achaemenid architecture is luxurious and impressive - and this is well seen in Persepolis. Persians melted diverse styles of the art from different regions of empire, creating a distinct imperial style. Well seen is the Greek (Ionian)

influence - palaces in Persepolis have typical Greek hypostyles and porticoes, columns are thin and tall, with barrel ribs.

The role of Persepolis in the life of Persian empire is not entirely clear.

Although it seems that Persepolis was the symbolic and administrative heart of the Achaemenid Empire, several more cities served as capitals of empire - such as Susa, the great Babylon and also Ecbatana - winter capital. Persepolis was rather little known outside Persia.

Basic structures in Persepolis were built from grey limestone. Notable and luxurious stone structures though were built of dark marble.

The columns in Persepolis were built of wood. Builders tried their best to get the largest known trees (cedars of Lebanon) to build the impressive structures. Only the largest columns - in Apadana and Propylaea - were made of stone.

Although the city experienced significant ravage after the capture by the Greeks and has been abandoned for 2300 years (!), magnificent ruins remain here. 15 enormous pillars stand since these times and several more have been re-erected.

Foundation – terrace

Even the foundation where the city stands, is amazing. This 125,000 m², 450 m by 300 m large (17.5 soccer fields) terrace is artificial - half hewn in the cliff and half built. The terrace is fastened by 5 - 13 m high walls.

Below the ground are built tunnels for sewage. Aerial photography shows that Persepolis had intricate underground water supply system of *quanats* - sophisticated underground canals.

Great Stairway

One of the first structures in the new city, construction started in 518 BC. This gargantuan structure has 111 steps, each only 10 cm high, 6.9 m wide.

Propylaea (Gate of Nations)

First structure after the staircase was 25 by 25 m large hall with magnificent entrance. It most likely was built by Xerxes I circa 475 BC.

Western gate of the structure still is adorned with 5.5 m tall sculptures of oxes. The hall had four 18.3 m tall columns, formed like palms. Building has engraving in three languages - Old Persian, Babylonian and Elamite - also other structures in Persepolis have such inscriptions informing about the builder of the structure.

Apadana Palace

The greatest palace in Persepolis, built by Darius I and Xerxes I in 515 - 475 BC. Palace was used for official audiences and could host up to 10,000 people! Grand hall of the palace was 60 by 60 m large, with 72 ornate columns, each 19 m high (13 remain standing). Columns were holding the heavy roof of this enormous structure.

Apadana, without doubt, contained art values of huge importance. Now we can see just scarce remains of these values - remnants of wall decorations with diverse bas-reliefs. External facades were adorned with the carvings of the brave Immortals - Persian elite troops. The building originally was painted in gaudy colors.

Hall of Hundred Columns (Throne Hall)

Second largest structure in Persepolis is the Throne Hall - imperial army's hall of honour. The construction of this 70 by 70 m large building was started by Xerxes and completed by Artaxerxes I. The remaining ruins of the building are covered with valuable bas-reliefs, showing the scenes of the emperor's heroic accomplishments.

This representative building initially was used for military ceremonies but gradually turned into a museum of Persian Empire. Throne Hall was severely damaged by the fire - only the base part of the building remained.

Central Palace (Tripylon Hall)

This small palace was built as an audience hall of Xerxes.

Palace of Darius (Tachara Palace)

This palace was started by Darius I and completed by Xerxes I, then extended by Artaxerxes III.

Palace of Xerxes (Hadish Palace)

This palace stands on live rock and uses the highest part of the terrace. The central hall had 36 wooden columns. The purpose of the southern part of building is not entirely clear - it might have served as an annex to Treasury.

Treasury

Started by Darius I in 515 BC and finished by Xerxes in 480 BC. Consists of a series of rooms, where the two larger rooms had 100 and 99 wooden columns. This enormous building had only two small entrances.

Alexander the Great managed to capture Persepolis with Treasury intact. According to Plutarch, there were needed 5,000 - 10,000 camels to bring the treasure away.

Stables (Garrison)

This complex of multiple rooms was the house for the servants of Persepolis and for guards. In these premises were found some 30,000 tablets with cuneiform writing - their decipheration is ongoing. Paradoxally these tablets have been preserved by the great fire, which hardened them.

"Queens Apartments" and Queen's Palace (Harem)

The purpose of this large complex of premises is not entirely clear. There is only a guess that this was the place where the women of Persepolis lived. These premises could have served for administrative purposes as well.

Tombs of Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III

Two of the most important Achaemenid emperors have been buried in Persepolis - one could be Artaxerxes II and another - Artaxerxes III. Tombs are cut in the hillside of Kuh-e Ramat mountains. Nearby there is another, unfinished rock-cut tomb - supposedly intended for Darius III.

Questionnaire on Ezekiel and Daniel

Ezekiel

1. The Rabbis said not to study Ezekiel until at least age 30. Why do you suppose this is so? What reason would they have for telling young people not to read Ezekiel?
2. Ezekiel is a slightly younger contemporary of Jeremiah, living through the same events that turned Jeremiah into “the weeping prophet.” However, Ezekiel seems less mournful than Jeremiah. Why do you think this is so?
3. Ezekiel came from a priestly family. How would the events of his time been particularly difficult for a priest? In what ways are priestly interests reflected in Ezekiel.
4. If you didn’t have your study Bible to help you, what would you make of Ezekiel’s vision in Chapter One? Why is this vision important in the life of Ezekiel?
5. Ezekiel’s message is a mournful one, yet he finds it sweet. How can this be?
6. Ezekiel is commanded to do odd (and difficult) things. Why all these strange commands?
7. What is the importance of the temple to Ezekiel? What bothers him about temple worship and the behaviour of the priests? Why do the priests do the kinds of things they do in the temple? How does Ezekiel’s discovery of secret priestly practice affect his life, attitude, and message.
8. In what ways are Ezekiel’s visions burdens? In what ways to they make his prophetic burden easier to bear?
9. Which of Ezekiel’s images seem to you the most striking or most effective in getting people to listen to and respond to his message?
10. Why do you suppose that the vision of the dry bones and the prophecies of Gog and Magog have captured imaginations in later times?
11. Why all the stuff about the temple in the end? How is this a fitting conclusion to the book of Ezekiel?

12. What did you find most difficult in the book of Ezekiel? What did you find most encouraging?

Daniel

Chapter 1

1. How long would Daniel and his friends train before serving the king?
What would they learn?
2. What did Daniel and his friends refuse to eat of the king's portions?
3. What gift was Daniel blessed with from God?

Chapter 2

1. Why did the king of Babylon wish his wise men to tell him his dream before interpreting it?
2. Who was able to reveal the king's dream and interpret it?
3. What was the first thing Daniel did after the King's decree?
4. Who will reveal to you things you need to know?
5. What did the king's dream mean?
6. What was the stone that became a great mountain?
7. Who and what do the kingdom's represent?

Chapter 3

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar make for himself and his people?
2. a. Who was instructed to fall down and worship the image that was made in Babylon? b. Who did not worship the image?
3. What punishment did the king put on those who would not worship the image?
4. What happened to Daniel's three friends when they were punished by the king?

Chapter 4

1. a. What did king Nebuchadnezzar's second dream mean? b. Why would this happen to him ?

Chapter 5

1. How did Belshazzar show no fear of God?
2. How are we like the vessels of the temple?
3. Did Belshazzar know of his forefather's relationship with God?

4. What message was sent to Belshazzar?
5. What happened to Belshazzar?

Chapter 6

1. What position was Daniel appointed under King Darius?
2. Why did some seek to find a charge against Daniel?
3. What statute did the governors of the kingdom set up for the king in which they knew Daniel would not follow?
4. Was the king willing to oblige Daniel's accusers?
5. What did the king find concerning Daniel the next morning?
6. What did the king do to the accusers of Daniel?

Chapter 7

1. Who do the four beasts represent?
2. What is different about the fourth beast?
3. What is the burning flame that the last beast is given to?
4. a. Who is the Ancient of Days? b. Who is the one coming in the clouds?
5. How does the fourth beast attempt to change the times and the law?

Chapter 8

1. Who is the angel that explained the vision to Daniel?
2. Of what time does the vision refer?
3. What will happen to some of God's people?
4. How will this last kingdom be broken?

Chapter 9

1. Who does Daniel pray for at this time?
2. Who comes to explain Daniel's second vision?
3. What is Daniel's second vision about?

Chapter 10

1. What had Daniel been doing for three weeks?
2. What did Daniel see at the Tigris river?
3. Why was the angel able to come explain the vision to Daniel?

Chapter 11

1. What happens to the kingdom of Greece after it arises to power?

2. From what kingdom did the kings of the North and South come?
3. How are the daily sacrifices taken away?
4. How will those who instruct many fall?

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<http://www.online-bijbel.nl/>

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Version Louis Segond (Normalement Domaine Publique)

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